

Summer 2016

Macalester Today Summer 2016

Macalester College

Follow this and additional works at: <http://digitalcommons.macalester.edu/macalestertoday>

Recommended Citation

Macalester College, "Macalester Today Summer 2016" (2016). *Macalester Today*. Paper 115.
<http://digitalcommons.macalester.edu/macalestertoday/115>

This Article is brought to you for free and open access by the Communications and Public Relations at DigitalCommons@Macalester College. It has been accepted for inclusion in Macalester Today by an authorized administrator of DigitalCommons@Macalester College. For more information, please contact scholarpub@macalester.edu.

Features

The Next Sound You Hear 10

Duluth musician Gaelynn Lea Tressler '06 wins NPR's Tiny Desk Contest—and the start of a national reputation.

Pioneering Preschool 12

Macalester once had nursery school kids playing and learning at the Miss Stella Wood Center.

Macalester After Dark 16

One Friday night last February, our photographer set out to see what was happening on campus.

Creating Screen Magic 20

Hollywood insider Ken LaZebnik '76 leads a screenwriting program designed to bring more women into the field.

Choosing a Bigger Life 24

Pinpointing that moment when everything changed

Get Set for Generation Z 28

As Millennials move on, Macalester gets ready to welcome the largest and most diverse cohort of students in its history.

Market-Savvy Foreign Aid 32

Mihir Desai '90 leads a thriving international development consultancy.





4

Departments

Letters 2

Household Words 3

Summit to St. Clair 4

*Game of Thrones, baby dinosaurs,
and a bee-friendly campus*

Class Notes 34

Mac Weddings 38

Alumni Award Winners 40

In Memoriam 45

Grandstand 48



38

Staff

EDITOR

Lynette Lamb
llamb@macalester.edu

ART DIRECTOR

Brian Donahue

CLASS NOTES EDITOR

Robert Kerr '92

PHOTOGRAPHER

David J. Turner

CONTRIBUTING WRITERS

Rebecca DeJarlais Ortiz '06
Jan Shaw-Flamm '76

ASSISTANT VP FOR COMM/PR

David Warch

MACALESTER COLLEGE



CHAIR, BOARD OF TRUSTEES

Jerry Crawford '71

PRESIDENT

Brian Rosenberg

► **MACALESTER TODAY** (Volume 104, Number 3) is published by Macalester College. It is mailed free of charge to alumni and friends of the college four times a year. Circulation is 32,000.

► **FOR CHANGE OF ADDRESS**, please write: Alumni Relations Office, Macalester College, 1600 Grand Ave., St. Paul, MN 55105-1899. Or call (651) 696-6295. Toll-free: 1-888-242-9351. Email: alumnioffice@macalester.edu

► **TO SUBMIT COMMENTS OR IDEAS**, Phone: 651-696-6452. Fax: 651-696-6192. Email: mactoday@macalester.edu Web: macalester.edu/alumni



Macalester Today is printed on Rolland Enviro 100, a 100 percent recycled paper. Our printer, Bolger Printing of Minneapolis, is FSC® certified.

The Way We Were

The photo of the 1961 Mac yearbook cover (Letters, Spring 2016) motivated me to write. The Class of 1961 was full of nice students, many of whom were Merit Scholars from small towns. We were taught by one of Mac's brightest collection of faculty members, a faculty that called us to strive for excellence. We attended chapel and were required to attend a general college assembly, where we listened to some world-famous speakers. We learned about dedicating our efforts to worthy causes, such as sending help to Vietnam. I met and married my wife, who played in the Mac pipe band, and our first child was born in Macville. Some of us were veterans who had fought in the Korean War. We studied hard and moved on to graduate school. One classmate, Kofi Annan, would become the Secretary of the United Nations. We became professionals in various fields and noted scholars. We had no time for nonsense or political correctness; we just felt obligated to make the world a better place. Now at 81, I look upon Macalester with gratitude and a little sadness.

Thomas L. Dynneson '61
Minneapolis

Garrison's Goodbye

I read in *Macalester Today* ("Goodbye to Garrison," Spring 2016) that Garrison Keillor made his first radio broadcast from our campus on July 6, 1974. My question is about his final broadcast: When will it be aired and will it also be held on our campus?

Tom Hilton '57
Atlantic Beach, Fla.

EDITOR'S NOTE: Garrison Keillor's final show as host of A Prairie Home Companion took place on July 1, 2016, at the Hollywood Bowl. PHC last broadcast from Macalester in July 2015.

Softball winners

In the most recent issue of *Macalester Today* ("A for Women Coaches," Spring 2016), women's basketball coach Kelly Roysland's appearance in *MinnPost* was highlighted with the claim that "...Roysland... is turning around a

longtime losing team after less than two years on the job." This is simply not true and ignores the many achievements of former coach Ellen Thompson, who took over a program in shambles and led our team to conference playoffs.

During its 2004–05 season, the Macalester women's basketball team opened with six losses, by an average margin of 40 points. The rest of the season was canceled due to lack of players. In 2005–06, Thompson's first year as coach, she built a team from scratch: slotting in to run scrimmages male players and women with no plans to play collegiate athletics. In 2006–07, Coach Thompson more than doubled the previous year's wins, earning her MIAC Coach of the Year honors.

In 2009–10, Coach Thompson led us to a record of 16–6, placing fourth in the conference and qualifying for playoffs. Had our arch-nemesis down Summit Avenue not spoiled our run, we are certain to have earned the first championship in school history (or so we tell ourselves after a few pints at Billy's). In 2010–11 we finished as sixth seed, with a 10–12 record in the regular season, earning another playoff berth. That year Thompson again received MIAC Coach of the Year honors.

Coach Roysland in no way inherited a "longtime losing team" and to say as much overlooks the extraordinary career of Coach Thompson and her unprecedented—and as yet unduplicated—achievements.

The 2009–10 Macalester women's basketball team and assistant coaching staff

EDITOR'S NOTE: We apologize for the mistake in use of the adjective longtime. Clearly it was only the few seasons immediately before Coach Roysland took over as coach that could be characterized as losing ones, and those years were preceded by some very fine seasons indeed. We regret overlooking the excellent record of Coach Ellen Thompson and especially her winning 2009–11 women's basketball teams.

On the Prosperity Gospel

Kate Bowler's essay "Death, the Prosperity Gospel and Me" (Grandstand, Spring 2016) is a profound statement in a column of a magazine that frankly could sometimes use a dose of the unpredictable. Bowler's analysis is razor-sharp and spot-on.

It is not surprising that the "Prosperity Gospel" she has studied—either expounded in church or implicit in lifestyle—is so pervasive in privileged communities across America. It is the natural outgrowth of a society built on a continent of immense natural wealth, where we believed the open road and its frontier were endless—where it was finally possible, we thought, to make a clean break with the Old World. But the fundamental rules of the universe apply here too, on the other side of the Atlantic—a fact we could ignore for a time but which is now being thrown in our faces by the new world order, and driven home by the first hints of mortality for a generation which honed pursuit of self-determination to a fine edge.

It is the old biblical bugaboo, hubris, come to rear its ugly head in the United States of America, the land of the alleged free and home of the conveniently brave: the delusion that we have control of our destiny, when in fact we are only hapless beneficiaries of luck—blessings, if you'll pardon the expression.

Bowler's diagnosis of advanced cancer at a relatively young age placed her squarely before a reckoning which many of us hope to defer. Her conversation with the inevitable bears the marks of one who has lived much longer and, as such, ought be closely considered by the rest of us. After all, our time is coming, too: sans teeth, sans eyes, sans taste, sans everything.

William Werner, Jr. '77
Minneapolis

Correction

Amanda Summer Slavin '78, who wrote the book *100 Places in Greece Every Woman Should Go*, uses the name Amanda Summer professionally and on her books. Also, the correct spelling of the Greek town referred to in the book excerpt is Kioni.

LETTERS POLICY

We invite letters of 300 words or fewer. Letters may be edited for clarity, style, and space and will be published based on their relevance to issues discussed in *Macalester Today*. You can send letters to llamb@macalester.edu or to *Macalester Today*, Macalester College, 1600 Grand Ave., St. Paul, MN 55105.

Not Advice

BY BRIAN ROSENBERG

Behind the desk in my office is a wall lined with books. I am somewhat particular about the way those books are organized, so they begin on the left with British literature, arranged chronologically and alphabetically and by genre according to a system only I would know, then move to American literature, then to literature written in languages other than English. The first book on the top shelf on the left-hand side is, of course, *Beowulf*. The last at the other end of the long wall is *The Unbearable Lightness of Being* by Milan Kundera. Between are not just John Donne and Toni Morrison and Bertolt Brecht. Between, in many respects, are the ideas and words and moments of beauty and insight that have shaped my life.

I note this because we are living in a moment when many people—maybe most people—want to judge the value of what you have experienced in the classrooms and laboratories and studios at Macalester in utilitarian terms, which generally means in terms that are measurable and, most often, monetary. I am not without sympathy for this desire. A college education is one of the largest financial investments you will ever make; you and your families should expect a return on that investment. I have two sons in their twenties who attended excellent and expensive liberal arts colleges. One is in law school; one will go through a ceremony not unlike this one in two weeks. I want them to get jobs.

But that is not all I want for them, nor is it all I want for you. What I want for them, and for you, are lives of meaning and purpose and happiness, and what I hope Macalester has done is make it more likely that you will have the opportunity to lead such lives.

Gauging the extent to which we do this, or even describing how we do it, is achingly difficult. How do you measure personal growth? What formula do you apply to determine the evolution of intellectual curiosity or empathy or love? When will you know the degree to which Macalester has made a difference in your lives? Now? In ten years? When you re-



President Rosenberg congratulating a Class of 2016 graduate. This column is drawn from remarks he made at that May 14 Commencement ceremony.

turn to campus for your 50th reunion? How do I determine or describe the value to me of reading those hundreds and hundreds of books? What metric would the Department of Education suggest I use?

Of a few things we can be sure. Everything you have experienced at this place—every poem you have read, every experiment you have conducted, every race you have run, every friendship you have made, every hurt you have felt—is now and forever a part of who you are; everything you have contributed is now a part of who we are, and a part of what future students at Macalester will experience. We hope we have been a worthwhile stop along the way in your journey, which now takes you beyond this campus; we know you have been an important part of the Macalester journey that is about to begin its 143rd year.

Tradition suggests that, in these remarks, I am supposed to offer you advice. Here it is: Don't confuse education with wisdom. Reject those who are peddling fear, bigotry, and hatred. Try at least once a day to see the world through the eyes of someone else. Don't get into a three-point shooting contest with Steph

Curry. And be wary of those who are overly free with advice.

Let me conclude by taking you back to my books. There are 741 of them on that wall—yes, I did count—and I have read virtually all of them (though I confess to this private gathering that I skipped through long sections of *Finnegans Wake* and that three volumes of the collected works of James Fenimore Cooper are more than any human being should have to endure). With rare exception, I don't remember more than a character here and a plot line there. But they helped mold me into whatever, for better or worse, I am today. More important than any information within them was the process of exploration that took me through their pages—the act itself had deep and intrinsic value that transcended any particular outcome.

Only those who have pushed their minds and their hearts into unfamiliar places will know what I mean. You all, I hope, know what I mean. **M**

BRIAN ROSENBERG is the president of Macalester College.

MATHEMATICAL BEAUTY



BY **ALEXANDRA MCLAUGHLIN '16**

CAN MATH BE BEAUTIFUL? George Hart thinks so. A mathematician and professional sculptor, Hart helped Macalester community members see the beauty in mathematical thinking earlier this spring when he led them in building a sculpture. Together they created the sculpture in Olin-Rice's Smail Gallery from 60 identically shaped pieces they'd earlier cut out of Baltic birch plywood.

Math major **Lucas Gagnon '16** (Ithaca, N.Y.) took a particular interest in the project because his honors project is related to the math Hart used to build the sculpture. Yet the event “drew a fairly diverse crowd,” Gagnon said, “not just the math-iest of the math majors.” As students counted and arranged pieces, onlookers paused to take in the scene. Within a few minutes, 25 people had gathered; a sense of anticipation was in the air.

Hart did not disappoint. Within three hours, he and the students had assembled a symmetrical five-foot diameter sculpture using cable ties. “While it might seem easy to just tie together pieces of wood, the geometric arrangement was really complicated,” says Ga-

gnon, “with some people figuring out where things went while others physically connected them.”

Passersby stopped to put together a few pieces while others simply watched. When it was complete, Facilities Services hung the sculpture in the center of Smail Gallery.

Later, Hart discussed his work with mathematically informed sculptures. Using mediums such as metal, wood, and plastic, he uses computer technology, laser-cutting, and 3D-printing to design and create sculptures. His artwork has been displayed around the world.

A professor at Stony Brook University, Hart has a BA in math and a PhD in electrical engineering and computer science. He organizes the annual Bridges Conference on mathematics and art, and edits the *Journal of Mathematics and the Arts*. He also cofounded the Museum of Mathematics in New York City, the only North American museum dedicated to that subject.

Gagnon was struck by Hart's ability to make math accessible. “It was remarkable to see a concept—which to me is mathematically beautiful—expressed in a way that can be appreciated by anyone.”



Math Meets *Game of Thrones*

The TV-inspired project began in fall 2013 when **Jie Shan '14** (Shanghai, China) came to math professor Andrew Beveridge with a proposal: Why not apply network science to the popular HBO show *Game of Thrones* to determine which character is most central to the drama? Beveridge thought it was “a simple but brilliant idea: create a network by connecting characters whenever their names appear within 15 words of one another in the book.”

Although most fiction is protagonist-driven, *Game of Thrones* is an ensemble show with multiple interwoven narratives. This project used the structure of that web of interactions to identify the central character.

Shan’s capstone was a great success, so Beveridge and Shan—who is now a software developer at Microsoft—rekindled their collaboration, improved the analysis, and published an article in *Math Horizons*. Their conclusion? Tyrion is the most important player in *Game of Thrones*.

Their article quickly spread across the Internet, first at Quartz, followed by stories in *Popular Science*, *The Huffington Post*, *Good Morning America*, National Public Radio, *Entertainment Weekly*, and hundreds of other media outlets. “Jie and I were as surprised as anyone that this paper took off like it did,” says Beveridge. “It’s fun to have started a conversation in which people enjoy talking about the power of math.”

Network science like this, incidentally, is part of Mac’s new data science concentration, which brings together mathematical techniques, computer science skills and specialized knowledge with a field of interest.

Lingering Landscapes:



This year’s entries to the IGC study away photo contest were especially strong on landscapes. We have room here for just three favorites (top to bottom): Roy’s Peak, Wanaka, New Zealand, by **Mara Halvorson '17** (Anthropology, Maple Grove, Minn.); Colorful beach huts, Muizenberg Beach, Cape Town, South Africa, by **Kira Liu '17** (Environmental Studies, Newton, Mass.); and Paris tribute, Copenhagen, Denmark, by **Emma Burt '17** (Psychology, Shoreline, Wash.).

DISCOVERY: BABY DINOS

BY ALEXANDRA MCLAUGHLIN '16

Long-necked sauropod dinosaurs are some of the biggest animals to ever walk the earth, but they hatched from eggs no larger than a soccer ball. Because of a dearth of fossils of very young sauropods, however, their lives right after birth were long a mystery.

No more. Last spring, new research led by geology/biology professor Kristi Curry Rogers—published in *Science*—shed light on the life of a baby *Rapetosaurus*, thanks to her discovery of a 67-million-year-old sauropod from Madagascar.

A beautifully preserved partial skeleton, so small that its bones were originally mistaken for those of a crocodile, allowed Curry Rogers and her colleagues to determine that this little *Rapetosaurus* was just a few weeks old when it succumbed to drought in its Cretaceous era ecosystem.



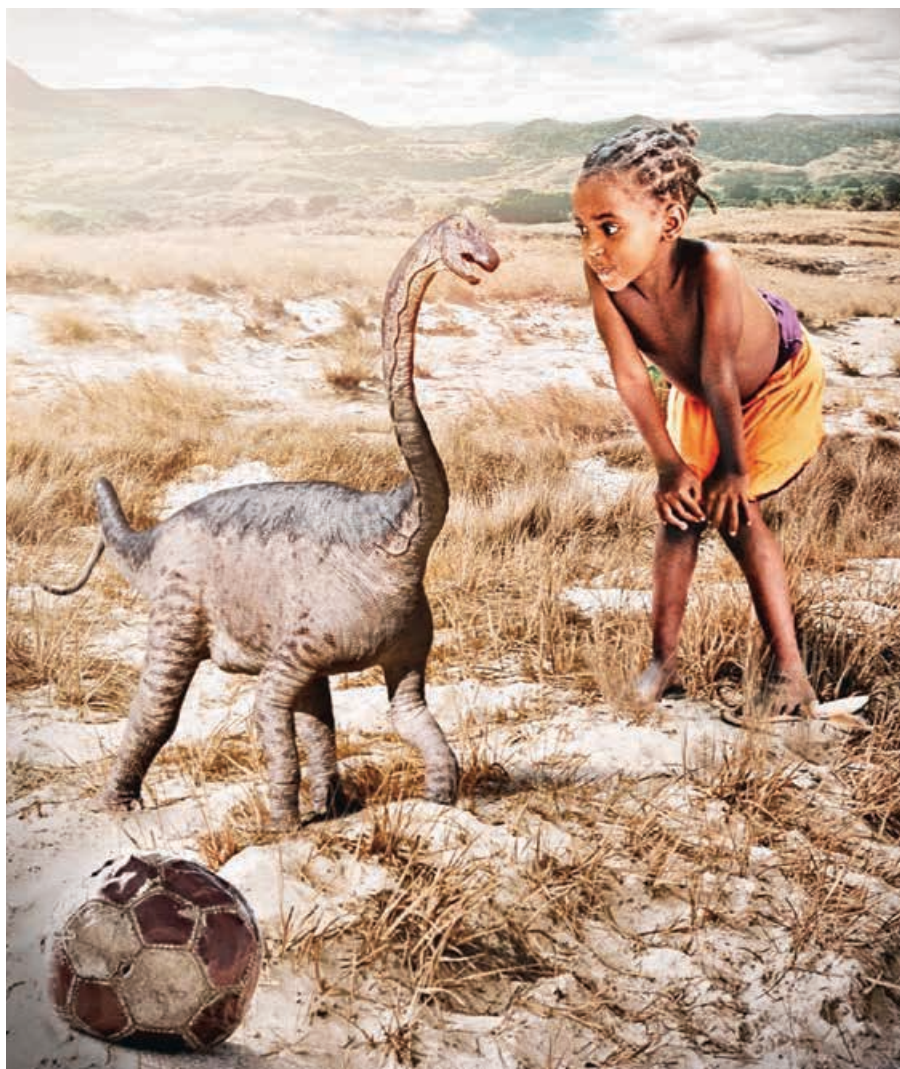
“When we find sauropod bones, they’re usually big,” says Curry Rogers. “Even juveniles can be bigger than cows. This is our first opportunity to explore the life of a sauropod just after hatching, at the earliest stage of life.”

Along with her colleagues—University of Washington graduate student **Megan Whitney '13**, Adelphi University professor Mike D’Emic, and University of Minnesota researcher Brian Bagley—Curry Rogers studied thin sections of bones under a microscope. The team also used a high-powered CT scanner to get a closer look at the bones’ interiors. The detailed microscopic features of fossil bones reveal patterns of organization similar to those of living animals, and make it possible for paleontologists to reconstruct the history of life in extinct animals.

Looking at the preserved patterns of blood supply, growth cartilages at the ends of limbs, and bone remodeling, says Curry Rogers, the scientists could conclude that “*Rapetosaurus* grew as rapidly as a newborn mammal.”

In addition, these microscopic features and bone proportions support the idea that *Rapetosaurus* was precocial, meaning it could walk as soon as it hatched and thus relied less on parental care than do many animals. The scientists could also observe microscopic areas deep within the bones that indicated the time of hatching, which allowed them to estimate the size of a newly hatched *Rapetosaurus*.

Baby *Rapetosaurus*es were about five pounds when they hatched, says Curry Rogers. “From there, they were on their own, foraging and making their way—or not—in a pretty tough ecosystem.”





Meet the Prez

Job: President, Macalester College Student Government (MCSG)

Name: Merrit Stüven '17

Hails from: Munich, Germany

Political history: As a freshman, ran and lost for class representative. Ran again as a junior year write-in candidate and won.

U.S. ties: When she was 10, Stüven moved with her family to Minneapolis for three years, where she learned English and American culture. She returned to her old school district as a high school exchange student, then chose a U.S. college.

Presidential platform: During her campaign, Stüven discussed MCSG's underrepresentation of women and domestic students of color. After poring over meeting minutes, she calculated that women spoke far less: at one meeting, less than a third of the time. "That jolted people," she says. One remedy? Stüven is advocating for a diversity and inclusion officer.

Long overdue: Stüven is the first woman MCSG president since 2012. "It's strange to think that an entire cohort of students has gone through school without seeing a woman president," she says, "when we make up 60 percent of the student body."

Role model: "It's important to see people like you in leadership positions, and know that you can aspire to those positions."

Ultimate goal: Stüven hopes that "MCSG becomes a body that speaks for students, a representative, powerful, and effective advocate for student voices."

—INTERVIEW BY ROSA DURST '17

WORLD-TRAVELING WATSONS

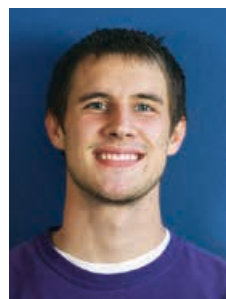
GLOBAL TRAVEL in the service of mathematics and refugees is on the agenda for two Mac grads awarded Thomas J. Watson Fellowships. The one-year \$30,000 grant for international exploration, independent study, and travel outside the United States is awarded annually to 40 graduating college seniors.

Ian Calaway '16 (Dubuque, Iowa)

MAJORED IN: Math and economics

IN HIGH SCHOOL: Math competitions allowed him to explore his creativity and provided a supportive intellectual community.

HIS PROJECT: "Mathematics: Community Through Collaboration and Competition" will take him to Australia, Brazil, China, Russia, and South Africa, where Calaway will focus on how math competitions foster community



and help potential mathematicians develop the tenacity and creativity their discipline requires.

AFTER WATSON: Calaway plans to attend graduate school in either mathematics or economics.



Laura Humes '16 (Shoreline, Wash.)

MAJORED IN: Environmental studies

PROJECT: "Reimagining the Refugee Experience: Sustaining Human Development in the Face of Displacement" will take her to Germany, Jordan, Rwanda, Tanzania, and Thailand.

GOAL: To gain deeper insight into the refugee experience by engaging in dialogues with communities of displaced people in refugee camps around the world, especially refugees from Syria, Burundi, and Myanmar.

AFTER WATSON: Humes hopes to pursue a career in a humanitarian field.

SCHOLAR AND FELLOW

2016 AMERICAN HUMANITY IN ACTION FELLOW

Who: Gage Garretson '16

(Camp LeJeune, N.C.), geography major

When: Joined other fellows from around the globe in the Humanity in Action Fellowship programs this summer.

Where: Amsterdam, The Netherlands, looking at a host of minority issues and producing original research on what Amsterdam is currently facing, framed more broadly through situations across the Netherlands and Europe.

What: A fellowship devoted to producing dialogue and

action in the name of human rights, the HIA fellowship brings together scholars from around the globe to produce effective, ethical change.

UDALL SCHOLAR

Who: Henry Kellison '17

(Austin, Texas), political science and philosophy major

What: Kellison was one of 60 students chosen from among nearly 500 candidates to be a 2016 Udall Scholar. Scholars—granted \$7,000 toward their next year of college—are chosen on the basis of their commitment to careers in the environment, American

Indian health care, or tribal public policy; leadership potential; record of public service; and academic achievement.

When: The 2016 Udall Scholars will assemble in August in Tucson, Ariz., to meet one another and program alumni; learn more about the Udall legacy of public service; and interact with community leaders.

What's next? Kellison hopes to pursue a career in public service, starting with a few years in environmental advocacy or policy research before returning to graduate school for law or public administration.

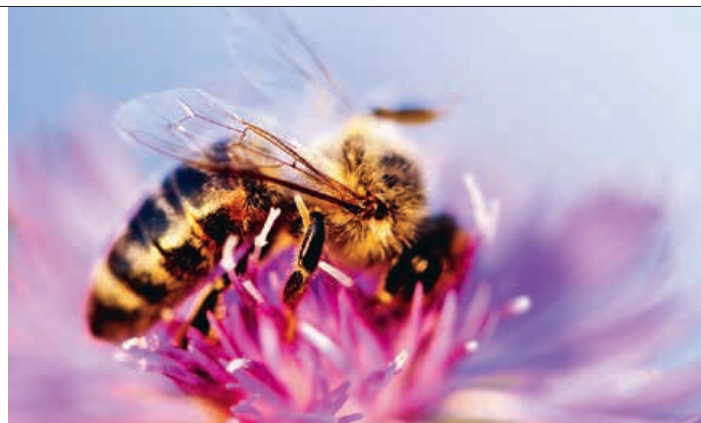
PLEASE BEE FRIENDLY

Emily Sylvestre '16 (Minneapolis) tackled an extra project during her senior year—one that will make an impact long after her graduation. Sylvestre spent the year researching, building consensus, and crafting a resolution to make Mac a more bee-friendly place. In May, thanks to her advocacy, it became the first college in Minnesota—and one of the first in the country—to become a Center for Food Safety bee-friendly campus.

Sylvestre's passion for honeybees and their role in our food system started during an internship with **Erin Rupp '04**, founder and executive director of Pollinate Minnesota—a nonprofit dedicated to education about bees and food systems. While working with Rupp, Sylvestre began wondering how the Mac community could advocate for bees.

The first step was persuading her environmental studies classmates to choose a pollinator theme for their senior seminar. The complexity of pollinator decline, she says, meant that the class could examine the problem from many academic angles. "Honeybees are such a huge part of our economy," Sylvestre says. "Pollinator decline is a symptom of a larger problem in our food system. Our ecosystems are breaking down."

But her efforts didn't stop there. She worked closely with Mac's facilities staff to learn about its current policies, and was happy to



discover that they had completed a pesticides overhaul in 2013 with protecting pollinators in mind. Thanks to Sylvestre, facilities staff members took a further step by committing to stop using neonicotinoids (pesticides known to harm bees) and to stop buying neonicotinoid-treated plants.

Next came meetings with Mac's student government and its Sustainability Advisory Committee. Sylvestre crafted a resolution to support policies promoting education about pollinators and eliminating neonicotinoid use. Once MCSG approved the resolution, she presented it to the college's senior staff members, who also signed off on it.

For Sylvestre, it was a fitting culmination to four years of working in the sustainability office. As sustainability network coordinator, she knew how to build consensus for this resolution. "Making big, meaningful change is hard," she says. "With this, Mac is taking a stand: We need to slow down and think about how what we're doing now will affect the future."

GRADUATION ADVICE

Following are excerpts from the remarks of 2016 Commencement speakers, actor/playwright Danai Gurira '01 and musician Gary Hines '74.



Danai Gurira '01

This place was preparing me for the larger world, not just in the sense of having a degree but in the sense that I would need to challenge institutions in the larger world...speak up for others, attempt to empower people other than myself. I realized I was in a microcosm of what the larger world was going to present to me, a very benevolent microcosm [that was] training me to become

a change-maker... The key thing this school gave me...is what I now call the Mac moment. The Mac moment is that singular moment of realization and self-discovery that may just stay with you for the rest of your life... What is your Mac moment? It's that moment when your heart breaks through and defines your destiny to you, if you dare to listen.



Gary Hines '74

So often we're told that we can change the world, but we're not told how. So, 2016, we're going to try to share some specifics with you...because it's something that has to happen on an individual basis. And you've got to be in shape to do that—spiritual, physical, mental shape... One, to start the day with prayer or meditation...then there's perspiration—to physically exert your body. Then

preparation. Every day, whatever your craft is, you want to hone it, so when that opportunity comes, you're prepared to accept it... And I've got one more "p" for you and that's perseverance. Most things that are worthwhile are going to take time.



VIETNAM REVISITED

A MACALESTER SYMPOSIUM last spring brought together leaders of the Vietnam antiwar movement with students and representatives of St. Paul's Southeast Asian communities. The occasion was the 41st anniversary of the end of the Vietnam War; the symposium was devoted to sharing perspectives on the war and its legacy.

The People Make the Peace: Lessons from the Vietnam Antiwar Movement (edited by American studies professor Karin Aguilar-San Juan and activist Frank Joyce), prominently featured at the symposium, includes reflections from important antiwar movement figures. Some of the contributors, including Chicago Seven member Rennie Davis, attended the symposium.

A dozen Mac students set the scene by creating visual exhibits, performances, interactive commentary, and discussion ques-

tions to help bridge generational and cultural differences. Led by Aguilar-San Juan, the students explored the college's pivotal role in the Vietnam antiwar movement, as host of the national student conference that forged the People's Peace Treaty. Considered

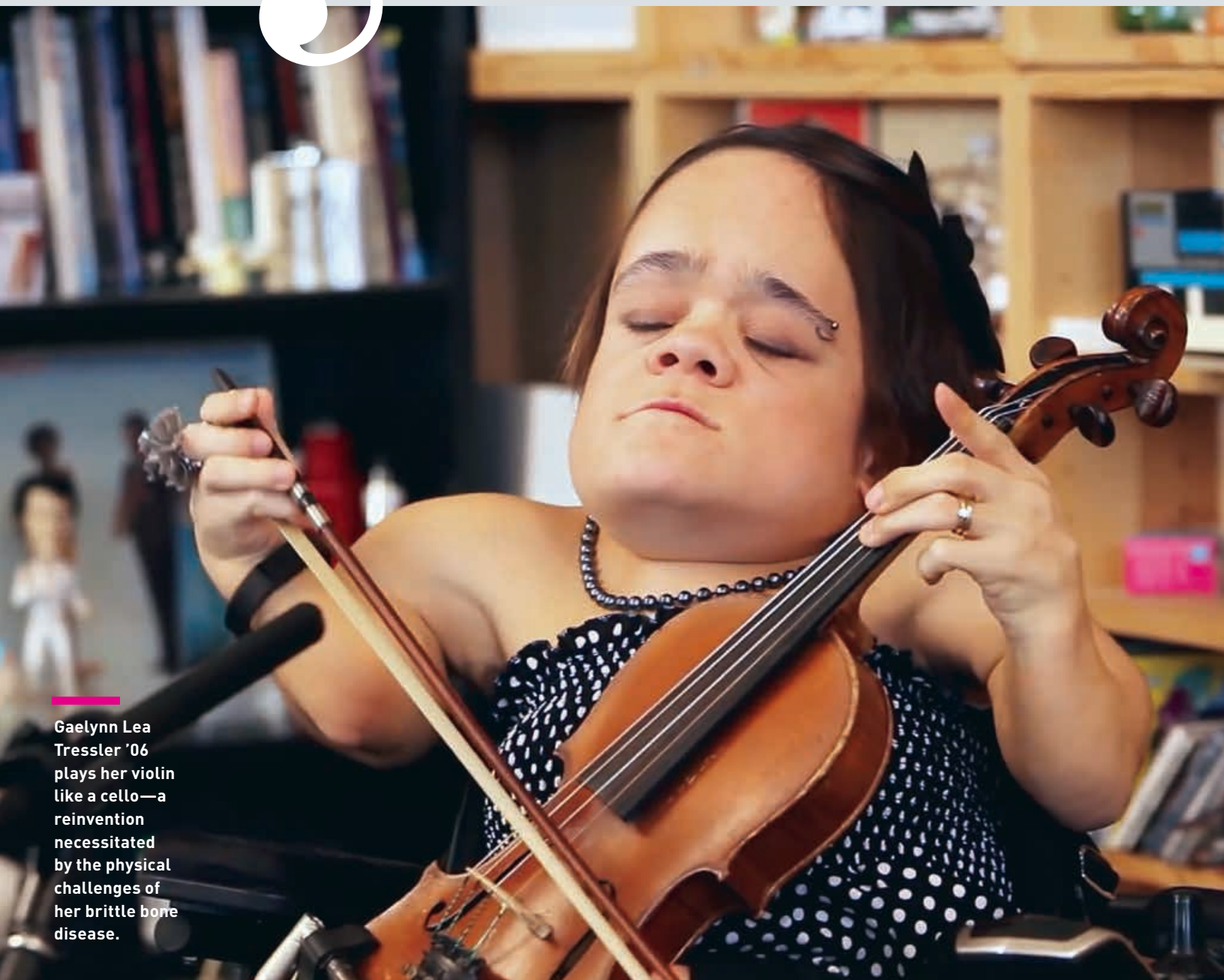
by post-war historian Melvin Small to be "the most innovative approach to ending the war," this concise list of demands was developed with students from the U.S. and North and South Vietnam.

The symposium's intergenerational aspect was exciting, says Aguilar-San Juan. "The students opened themselves up to a relationship with the past, and bore witness to a host of complex and conflicted memories about the war," she says. "When they sat down with movement elders and began a dialogue together, a new page of history was written."

Sara Ludewig '17 (Northfield, Minn.) is conducting research on the antiwar movement at Mac for her honors thesis. She wants to interview alumni from the classes of '68, '69, '70, and '71 about their perceptions of the anti-Vietnam War movement on campus. To participate, email sludewig@macalester.edu.

The Next Sound

— Duluth musician Gaelynn Lea Tressler '06 wins NPR's Tiny Desk Contest —



Gaelynn Lea Tressler '06 plays her violin like a cello—a reinvention necessitated by the physical challenges of her brittle bone disease.

You Hear

—and the start of a national reputation.



Alan Sparhawk (left) of the band Low, a friend of Tressler's, played on two of her Tiny Desk competition songs. They met when Sparhawk heard Tressler perform at a Duluth farmers market.

BY GENE REBECK



Duluth violinist and singer Gaelynn Lea Tressler—she performs as Gaelynn Lea—didn't know quite what to expect that afternoon in early March when National Public Radio called.

It was big news, bigger than she'd ever hoped for: Tressler had won NPR's Tiny Desk Contest, an annual competition that provides

aspiring musicians with the chance to become more widely known. A video of her one-song performance had beaten out thousands of other entries from across the U.S. "I remember just trying to focus on the words—it was surreal," she says of the phone conversation.

The award revealed to the country what people in her hometown had long known: There is no musician quite like Gaelynn Lea.

Duluth born and raised, Tressler fell for the violin as a fourth-grader. "I just loved the sound of the strings—I thought they were beautiful," she says. She later joined her school orchestra, working with a teacher who taught her how to play it something like a cello. Then there was the influence of Simon and Garfunkel, whose vocal harmonies enthralled her. "I grew up listening to them *a lot*," she says. "I was obsessive."

Entering Macalester in 2002, Tressler met a group of students who made up Flying Fingers, musicians interested in learning and performing traditional Celtic music. She found acceptance and fun with Flying Fingers; the experience also broadened her violin skills and led her away from classical music toward folk sounds and performance.

After a few years, however, Tressler returned home to finish her degree at the University of Minnesota–Duluth, and began immersing herself in her hometown's musical world.

It was a propitious time. Duluth's music scene has flourished in the past decade, offering performers an abundance of venues as well as an annual festival called Homegrown, which spotlights local musicians. That musical richness has recently produced two nationally known bands—Low, with its dense layers of electrified drone; and Trampled by Turtles, whose music is more homespun and old-timey.

Whatever their style, Duluth musicians and artists reflect a kind of artisanal ethos—a strong DIY element that's supportive, down-to-earth, and idiosyncratic—just the kind of aesthetic ecosystem in which a distinctive performer like Tressler could flourish.

Her first Duluth band was a bluegrass vocal duo called Gabel and Gaelynn, which lasted until 2009. Tressler also cofounded a group with friend Ariane Norrgard called Snobarn; performed with Duluth poet Tina Higgins; and played for two years in a duo called the Ge-

tarounds, with friend Dan Dresser. "It's been really fun because every band is different," she says.

In 2011 Tressler began working with Low guitarist Alan Sparhawk in a duo called The Murder of Crows. In contrast to her usual folk-focused music, what she does with Sparhawk she calls "more atmospheric—slow and winding. There are a lot of layers of strings." Working with Sparhawk, she adds, has "expanded what I thought the violin could do" in terms of sound colors. He also taught Tressler how to use a looping pedal, a cunning little piece of technology that lets her play many violin parts at once. This allowed her to launch a solo performing career, and to record her Tiny Desk-winning song.

Tressler is a violin teacher as well as a performer. Given her eclectic musical background, it's no surprise that her approach to teaching is equally open-minded. Her students—mostly beginning and intermediate-level violinists—range in age from grade-schoolers to senior citizens. Most of them want to learn traditional fiddle music; each, she says, is unique.

A couple of those students, along with a close friend, pushed her to enter the Tiny Desk Contest. But which song should she record? While performing at a Duluth pizza shop, Tressler asked audience members to vote on their favorite song. They chose "Someday We'll Linger in the Sun," a mournful but utterly romantic piece about the travails that accompany love.

A friend made a cell phone video of Tressler performing the song in her office, and then she waited. Nearly 6,000 musicians had sent in video entries, "so I was not thinking I was going to win," she says. Then came the call, followed by NPR-sponsored appearances throughout April and May, in cities that were new to her as a performer, including Brooklyn and Los Angeles.

So what's next for Gaelynn Lea? "Everything is sort of up in the air right now in terms of my future," she says. "The last guy who won [the NPR Tiny Desk Contest] ended up working with a record label," but, she adds, "the industry's so weird, you can't predict that stuff."

Tressler does hope to perform in more cities. She'd also like to record a Christmas album, explore Nordic and Canadian fiddle music, and perhaps return to her classical music roots. And then, of course, she intends to write more songs.

"So yeah, I'm working on all of those things," Tressler says. "I want to keep expanding what I do." Her audience is very likely to expand as well. **M**

GENE REBECK is a Duluth-based freelance writer.

Pioneering Preschool

A thriving school of elementary education once existed at Macalester. Long gone are the shouts of preschool children romping around the campus; gone, too, is the quaintly named Miss Stella Wood Center with its bright Blue Door...

BY TIM BRADY → PHOTOS FROM MACALESTER ARCHIVES

In the spring of 1948 an acute shortage of elementary school teachers in Minnesota prompted a call to state liberal arts colleges from Governor Luther Youngdahl. He asked them to please produce more teachers: the Baby Boom generation was blossoming and instructors were badly needed to instruct the massive wave of toddlers nearing school age in post-war Minnesota.

Dr. Charles Turck, then president of Macalester College—which at the time had no education program—heard the plea and responded. Instead of building a department from scratch, he decided to approach one of the area's great pioneers of elementary education, the esteemed Stella Wood, with a proposal to merge. Miss Wood, then 83 years old and director for more than 50 years of her own self-named school in Minneapolis, was ready to step aside and join her school with the proper partner. Macalester looked like a good prospect.

Hands were shaken; papers were signed; the deal was done. Stella Wood retired to Illinois and the Stella Wood Children's Center became the backbone of a Macalester education program that lasted for the next 30 years, linking Mac to traditions that stretched back to the very roots of elementary education in Minnesota.

Born in Chicago in 1865, Stella Louise Wood turned an early interest in teaching into a career that began in the 1880s and lasted past World War II. Educating children of kindergarten age was a new phenomenon in the 19th century, born of German educational reforms.

Wood studied the nascent profession at a Chicago normal school and later at the University of Michigan. She founded kindergarten programs in Muskegon, Mich., and Dubuque, Iowa, before being invited by the fledgling Minneapolis Kindergarten Association to teach at one of the city's three private-school kindergartens, and to estab-

lish a training program for Minnesota's elementary school teachers.

At the time, Minneapolis had no public school kindergartens; indeed, there were few such programs in the country. Kindergarten advocates, primarily reform-minded women such as Minneapolis civic leader Clara Ueland, set about to change that. They lobbied the Minneapolis School Board to establish public kindergartens and asked Stella Wood to hit the speaking circuit to talk up the idea. Just three months after her arrival in the city, a room in Minneapolis's Sheridan School was designated the city's first public kindergarten. Others were quickly added.

As the concept of public kindergartens grew more mainstream and classes spread through the state, more teachers were needed for the growing number of students. Once again, Wood took the lead, in 1905 establishing a two-year elementary teachers' training college in Minneapolis that was soon churning out skilled instructors. A laboratory kindergarten, designed for practice teaching, was created for her students in a Northeast Minneapolis settlement house.

Education classes were taught by an assortment of faculty, ranging from staff from the Minneapolis Institute of Art to the University of Minnesota.

Remarkably, the school had no permanent home for its first 10 years. Students lived in boarding houses and classes were held at the settlement house until a more permanent site was found on an elm-shaded block of Bryant Avenue South in Minneapolis in 1917. Miss Wood's School continued to prosper and her graduates began to spread

across the country.

A petite woman with wire-rimmed glasses, hair set in gray waves, and frequently sporting a boutonniere and pearls, Wood was an impeccable symbol of gentle propriety. Her reputation in elementary education grew beyond her role in Minneapolis and took on national



Miss Stella Wood, founder of the education program that moved to Mac in 1949.



Clockwise from upper left: Education students reviewing children's literature in the 1950s; in that same era, this "Mountain Climber" was a new-fangled playground contraption; student teacher Sylvia Ede Stephens '63 reads a story to the school's preschoolers.





Clockwise from top: Former director Jean Lyle (holding child) and preschoolers enjoy a musical moment with Mac students; Miss Wood with trainees in the 1940s when the school was still located in South Minneapolis; President Harvey Rice reading to preschoolers in 1959; the Stella Wood Children's Center was located in the Conservatory building on Summit Avenue, next door to what is today the Briggs Alumni House.

significance. She was named president of the International Kindergarten Union in the late 1910s.

The Depression caused a dip in enrollment at the Wood School, and another trough came during World War II, when many would-be teachers chose instead to work in the war effort. More change was on the way: In the post-war years school districts began to prefer to hire teachers with four-year college degrees. Not only did Miss Wood not offer a bachelor's degree, but a number of area universities, most notably the University of Minnesota, did not accept the school's credits.

This was to say nothing of the fact that Stella Wood turned 80 in 1945 and the house on Bryant Avenue "was fairly coming apart at the seams," according to Wood's biography. In its 40 years, Miss Wood's School had graduated more than 2,000 students, and had alumnae in 44 states, but it was a good and necessary thing when Macalester offered to take the program under its wing.

Stella Wood retired in September 1948 as plans were being made to accept Macalester's first students in its new Children's Center. Wood never witnessed the complete merger; she died the following spring.

That fall the first 178 students arrived at Macalester to participate in the elementary education department's opening. Included in this group were a few students from other area colleges—including Carleton, St. Olaf, and Augsburg—searching for teaching credits.

Faculty and staff in the new program were drawn from the old Miss Wood school and various Macalester departments. The school's first principal was Edith Stevens, a holdover from Miss Wood. In an interview with the *St. Paul Pioneer Press* at the time, she philosophized on the changing qualities of a good kindergarten teacher, "People used to think if a girl could draw or play the piano a little, she was cut out for kindergarten work. Today those are incidentals. The most important thing, of course, is character—that, and personality."

The lab preschool was soon moved to Macalester as well, where it shared space in a building known as the Conservatory with the music and drama departments. A brightly painted blue door, which quickly became an icon of the children's teaching center, marked the preschool's entrance. Students were drawn largely from neighborhood and faculty families. Initially 20 kids, ages 3 and 4, were enrolled.

Aside from Miss Wood practice teachers, the preschool often drew visits from nursing students from nearby Gillette Hospital; high school seniors checking out the college's elementary education program; and Macalester students taking a break from their studies to watch the little kids at play.

The cohabitation of the Conservatory among the Music and Drama departments and the nursery led to a daily version of musical chairs. **Rica Jensen Van '63**, who would one day send her own children to the nursery and work there as well, was a music student during her first years at Mac. She remembers the lunchtime "switch" from playroom to risers and music stands as the kids shuffled out and the college musicians filed in.

A large and active alumnae organization flourished well into the 1990s, as proud of their connections to Miss Wood as any former students of Mr. Chips ever were. The long-published alumni newsletter kept chapter members in more than 40 states abreast of Macalester activities.

In 1960 the blue door briefly moved to a house just west of campus, as increased enrollment and expanding programs at the college limited space for the education program and its lab school. By 1965, however, the nursery school was once again back in the Conservatory.

About that same time a new leader, Jean Lyle, assumed the directorship of the Macalester College Children's Center, as the program became known, reinvigorating the institution. In 1972 she oversaw its renaming as the Stella Louise Wood Children's Center.

Lyle remained head of the children's center until the college was forced to close it in 1979 because of budget constraints and the sad state of the Conservatory. She died unexpectedly that spring, just a few months before the school closed.

There is a coda to this story: **Rica Van '63**—who eventually earned a degree in elementary education—not only sent her children to the Stella Louise Wood Children's Center, she wound up student teaching there herself in the late '70s under Lyle. As the school was closing in 1980, she and colleagues Betty Hills and Maxine Simon loaded a pickup truck with bookshelves and tiny tables, wall clocks and nap mats, and hauled them a few blocks west to the basement of St. Mary's Episcopal Church in the Merriam Park neighborhood.

Today, thriving as the Jean Lyle Children's Center, the preschool still occupies that space, still employs Rica Van as codirector, and still uses the same tables, chairs, and cubbies that pupils used 65 years ago when the doors of Stella Louise Wood Children's Center first opened on the Macalester campus. ■

TIM BRADY is author of the forthcoming *His Father's Son: The Life of General Ted Roosevelt Jr.* (Jan. 2017, Random House).

VOICES FROM MAC'S PAST

Some of the college's historical reel-to-reel audio recordings, digitized by the Macalester College Archives, are now available in DigitalCommons. Listen to DeWitt Wallace in 1963 tell a story about the college's financial difficulties in his father's day or Walter Mondale talk about money in American politics in his 1973 Commencement address. This ongoing project, with digitized audio and transcripts continually being added, was financed in part by the Minnesota Historical Society's Arts and Cultural Heritage Fund. For more information, contact archivist Ellen Holt-Werle at holtwerle@macalester.edu.

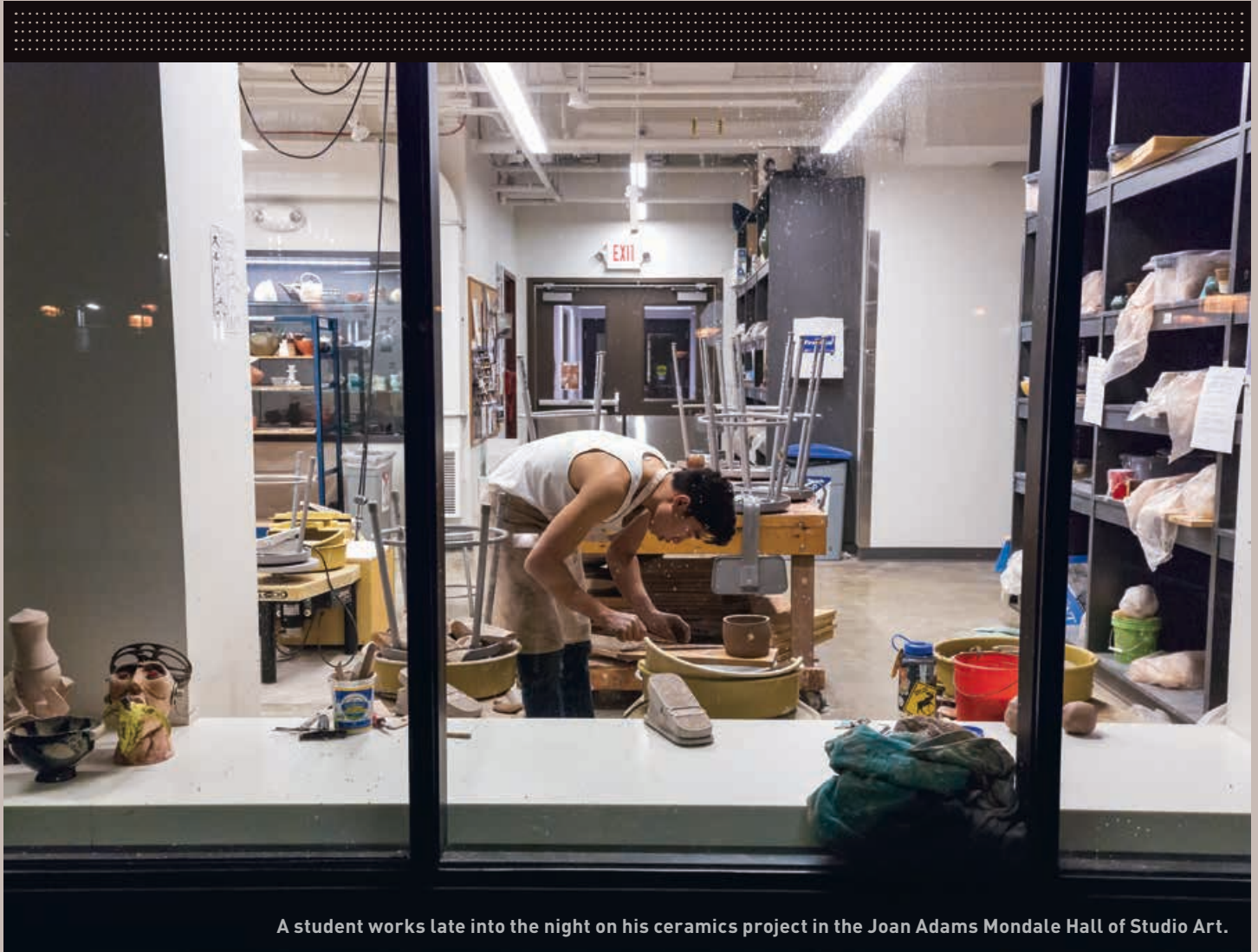




Clockwise from top left: A storyteller performs at the Spark student arts organization's party in the basement of Dupre; a long jumper flies during the Kilt Classic indoor track meet in the Leonard Center; students mingling at the Spark party; the Campus Center, always a hub of evening activity; pool players in The Loch lounge, Campus Center basement.



Macalester **After Dark**



A student works late into the night on his ceramics project in the Joan Adams Mondale Hall of Studio Art.

BY **LYNETTE LAMB** → PHOTOS BY **DAVID J. TURNER**

LATE FEBRUARY is one of the spring semester's busiest social and extracurricular periods at Macalester. We chose one particularly packed Friday night to observe the action on campus. Conclusion: It's fun to be young and free and in college, enjoying a weekend evening.

February 26 was a temperate night, with unseasonably warm weather predicted for the next day. Right at dinnertime, students and professors were packed into 226 Neill to hear noted critic **Ben Davis '01** discuss art and class. "Like entrepreneurs, artists often come from families with money," Davis told the audience. "It's easier to be creative when basic needs are met."

Meanwhile, across the lawn, the Leonard Center field house was jammed with participants and viewers of the Kilt Classic, the final indoor track meet of the season. The scent of sweat and popcorn mixed

with the cheers of the crowd as contestants from Augsburg, Bethel, Gustavus, Hamline, and St. Kate's competed with Mac athletes in multiple events. The Mac men's team cheered on the women's team ("Come on Rosie!" "Go Sarah!") in the mile event, while high jumpers sailed across the bar.

Meanwhile, an even more quintessential Mac experience was unfurling just across the great lawn, inside Macalester-Plymouth United Church. Even before the door opened, the blasting bagpipes of the Macalester Pipe Band were easily audible. The band was holding an open house and pasta dinner to "connect with the community and help people think about pipe band in a positive way," said **Meridith Richmond '12**, who has been involved with the group since her college days. Neighbors ranging in age from babies to the elderly listened to the pipes and



Runners competing in the Kilt Classic in the Leonard Center fieldhouse.

drums, tried out chanters, and dug into piles of spaghetti.

As the dinner hour turned to evening, the action heated up at the Janet Wallace Fine Arts Center. In the theater building, a five-member ensemble performed *The Clean House*, a 2005 Pulitzer-nominated play, directed by **Stephen Yoakam '75**. Over in the music wing, the Mairs Concert Hall was filling up for the Orchestra Concerto Competition Winners concert, featuring **Stephanie Van Fossen '19** (Madison, Wis.) on flute and **Yihao Zhou '16** (Beijing, China) and **Alex Ramiller '18** (Portland, Ore.) on piano.

As always, the Campus Center was abuzz with activity, with Black History Month keynote speaker and comedian Phoebe Robinson performing in the John B. Davis lecture hall, the usual roster of pool play-

ers next door in The Loch, and dozens more students chatting and studying upstairs.

But undoubtedly the jumping-est joint on campus this Friday night was Kagin Commons, where more than a hundred students—with team names like Mom's Spaghetti and The Eggs—were patiently queuing up to play laser tag. The excitement was palpable as the teams were issued color-coded lasers and set off to chase one another in the dark amidst giant bean bags.

Okay, so some college students are really just big kids. But if February 26 was any indication, they are also art lovers, culture critics, pianists, sprinters, bagpipers, actors, and so much more. All of which can be seen most weekends at Macalester—after dark. **M**

Left: A member of the Pipe Band demonstrates the chanter to neighborhood kids; **right:** Mac students playing ping pong at the Leonard Center's Kofi Annan memorial table.





Clockwise from top left: Comedian/actor Phoebe Robinson, shown in J.B. Davis Hall, was the keynote speaker for Black History Month; pipers at the Pipe Band's Open House and Pasta Dinner, held at Macalester-Plymouth Church; a high jumper competes at the Kilt Classic; Mark Mandarano leads the orchestra at the Concerto Competition Winners Concert in Mairs Hall; avid laser tag players in Kagin.





Ken LaZebnik '76
at the Jim Henson
Studios in Holly-
wood, base for his
new MFA screen-
writing program.



CREATING SCREEN MAGIC

Hollywood insider **Ken LaZebnik '76**
leads a new screenwriting
program designed to bring more
women into the field.

BY **LYNETTE LAMB** → PHOTOS BY **RICK DUBLIN**

Students are scattered around the sunny courtyard of Jim Henson Studios, a small and charming historic Hollywood studio created by Charlie Chaplin. In the center of the courtyard is their lanky, warm-voiced leader, **Ken LaZebnik '76**, founder and director of a new low-residency MFA program in TV and screenwriting.

“Hey, back to the screening room everyone!” Ken shouts over the din of conferring writers. “Time for some scenes.” The 20 students—17 women and 3 men—file into the studio’s cozy screening room to watch several of their scripts be performed. Professional actors have been hired to act out scenes from three student screenplays. Over the course of the two-year MFA program, each student will have the chance to see how their script sounds when performed by real actors.

The first piece involves a warring couple; the second a pregnant widow, her mother-in-law, and a realtor; and the third two friends meeting at a college reunion. The feeling of being on a real set is accentuated by the presence of TV director Mark Taylor, on hand to give actors notes after their first readings. The second time through is invariably improved from his feedback.

When the performances are over, the writers are speechless, breathless with gratitude to have heard their words come alive for the first time.

* * *

Gratitude and excitement seemed to be the most common sentiments among members of this first cohort of the Stephens College low-residency MFA screenwriting program. When the group met for the first time last summer, one student tweeted, “Still in the ‘pinch me’ phase that I get to be here every day for school.”

LaZebnik—whose father taught creative writing at Stephens, a small women’s college in Columbia, Mo.—originally assumed that the residential portion of his new MFA program would be held on the Stephens campus. To her credit, college president Dianne Lynch insisted otherwise. She encouraged LaZebnik to establish a satellite campus in Hollywood—a location that has made all the difference. “This studio just has the best vibe in the world,” he says happily. “Plus, locating it here has allowed us to attract fantastic faculty and guest speakers. Writers, producers, and directors are more than happy to speak here.”

LaZebnik and
his first class of
MFA students at
Henson Studios in
January 2016.

Women in TV and Film

Screenwriting programs designed to encourage and train more women writers are greatly needed, if statistics are any indication.

According to the Writers' Guild of America West's latest study, female writers accounted for just 15 percent of feature film work in 2012 and 27 percent of TV writers. In addition, female screenwriters earn just 77 cents for every dollar earned by a white male writer.

Just as alarmingly, reports the *HuffPost*,

women wrote just 9 percent of spec scripts sold between 2010 and 2012.

It's not surprising, then, that not a single film among the 100 top-grossing movies of 2014 starred a woman over 45. A University of Southern California analysis found that actresses of all ages were "dramatically outnumbered" by men in movies.

It will take more than one MFA program to rectify those kinds of odds, but it's a good start.



Besides LaZebnik himself—who has written for several TV shows, including *Touched by an Angel*—Hollywood insiders teaching in the program include LaZebnik's brothers (younger brother, Rob, writes for *The Simpsons* while older brother, Philip, has written animated features such as *Prince of Egypt* and *Pocahontas*); Alexa Junge, who has written for *Friends*, *The West Wing*, and *Grace and Frankie*; Winnie Holzman, who created *My So-Called Life* and wrote the script for the musical *Wicked*; and Carol Barbee of *Judging Amy* and *A Girlfriends' Guide to Divorce*.

Hollywood pros, especially women writers and directors, readily respond to the program's mission of increasing the ranks of women in their world (see story on facing page). Says student Sarah Phillips, "Ken saw that women's voices weren't being heard [in Hollywood], and he asked, 'What can I do about this?'"

Job one is teaching his students about the women who came before them. The Stephens program includes a course on the history of screenwriting, taught by film historian and TV writer Rosanne Welch, in which students are steeped in the rich history of women in film.

Class members study—and are inspired by—such past luminaries as Anita Loos, Frances Marion, and Alice Guy-Blaché. After learning about these lost ladies of Hollywood, one student wrote: "Frances Marion was one of the first screenwriters, and the first person to win two Academy Awards. Her work is insanely brilliant. Many film schools don't teach about her or they minimize her story. Tell your friends about her!"

* * *

Back on that January evening, the work of more recent female filmmaker Nora Ephron took center stage. Barbara Nance, who teaches an entire course about Ephron in USC's film school, lectured on the late writer/director and screened her underrated 1992 film *This is My Life*.

The next morning the group drove to Westchester to tour YouTube's studio space. That visit provides a peek into an important new entrée to the entertainment industry, whose programs and channels are increasingly serving as fodder for TV programs. "You can now build a career doing content creation on YouTube," says LaZebnik. "It's new ground for someone like me, used to traditional TV shows." The day before, the class had Skyped with former YouTube producer Jhanvi Shiram, a student of LaZebnik's at the USC Stark Producing Program. "Ken was one of my favorite professors in the program," Jhanvi says.

That compliment is a familiar refrain from LaZebnik's students and fellow instructors. U.S. Army veteran class member Mikayla Daniels (Cheney, Wash.) told of having a painful neck injury flare up during the week. "Ken kept tabs on me and kept asking if I needed to go to the hospital," she says. "He cares about us as individuals and not just as students." Adds her classmate, Missourian Amy Banks, "Ken is so encouraging, and the thought he puts into every detail of the program is amazing. He's like our father/agent/teacher."

Fellow teacher Welch echoes that sentiment. "Ken was always the most balanced person in the writing room on *Touched By an Angel*," she says. "He's truly the nicest guy in Hollywood." The top-notch speakers he attracts, they agree, are evidence of his stellar reputation.

Speakers, of course, are only one part of the MFA program. The bulk of learning takes place through diligent year-round writing by students and regular coaching by mentors. Each student works with one mentor/instructor on TV scripts and another on film scripts, and is expected to produce both kinds of scripts each year.

LaZebnik, Welch, and Liz Keyishian (*Lonesome Dove*, *The Dead Zone*) are the principal mentors, although other writers are pulled in to help, especially when a student has a particular interest. Los Angeles student Sarah Phillips, for example, who aspires to write musicals, is working with *Prince of Egypt* screenwriter Philip LaZebnik. Says Ken, "I love that we can get great people with specific skills that match up with student interests."

This summer Stephens's second cohort of students will start their journey at Henson Studios. Although it won't happen overnight, LaZebnik's fondest desire is that his screenwriting program will launch a talented new group of women into TV and film writing. "It's important to build this network of women writers and filmmakers across the country," he says. "I hope we can be part of pushing things toward equality for women in film. If we can do that, I'll feel very satisfied." ■

LYNETTE LAMB is editor of *Macalester Today*.



More On Ken

- One of LaZebnik's closest friends from Macalester is Mixed Blood Theatre founder **Jack Reuler '75** (Minneapolis). LaZebnik spent six years after graduation on staff at Mixed Blood; many of his plays have been produced there.
- A Macalester interim class on the literature of baseball inspired LaZebnik and **Steve Lehman '76** (St. Paul) to create the critically acclaimed *Minneapolis Review of Baseball*.
- **Pamela Winfrey '78**, a curator at San Francisco's Exploratorium, will be a member of LaZebnik's second MFA screenwriting class.
- While living in New York in the late '80s, LaZebnik met Garrison Keillor, who hired him to write for *A Prairie Home Companion*. This summer LaZebnik will be a speaker on Keillor's Prairie Home Companion cruise to Alaska.
- LaZebnik's son Jack, a graduate of West Point, is a U.S. army officer stationed at Fort Benning, Georgia. This family military connection, in part, led LaZebnik to volunteer as a teacher for the Writers Guild of America's Veterans Writing Project. Several of his MFA students are graduates of that program.
- LaZebnik met his wife, actor Kate Fuglei, at the Guthrie Theater in Minneapolis, when both were cast in its annual production of *A Christmas Carol*. "She was Belle and I was Beggar Number 2," says LaZebnik, "which tells you all you need to know about our respective acting talents."

Choosing a Bigger Life

BY ERIN PETERSON → ILLUSTRATIONS BY WESLEY BEDROSIAN





We all have moments in our lives that feel like inflection points—times that transform our lives so fully that we can divide our days into Before and After. For many of us, those moments require us to make a difficult decision that ultimately allows us to lead a bigger life.

That bigger life could be many things: It could be a decision to take a job we're not entirely sure we're qualified for, or to quit the job we've spent years mastering in order to pursue a dream we've had for a lifetime. It could be a decision to move halfway around the world, or to take a crazy chance on love.

These decisions may not make life easier. They may not be more financially remunerative than the alternatives, and they may bring their own challenges with them. But they are the decisions we make with an eye toward a life that feels more meaningful and fulfilling.

In the following pages, you'll see the conversations we had with eight Macalester alumni and faculty members about their own "bigger life" moments, including the sacrifices they made along the way to live life on their own terms.

We'd love to hear about your own bigger life moments. Share them with us at mactoday@macalester.edu.

I quit a good job to pursue music.

Gary Hines '74, one of this spring's Commencement speakers, is music director and producer of *Sounds of Blackness*. The group's most recent single, "Royalty," is a collaboration with St. Paul's High School for Recording Arts.

My first full-time job out of Macalester was as an investigator for the Minnesota Department of Human Rights. While it was very rewarding work, I knew that music, which I had been doing at night, was my ultimate goal and desire.

One morning, after 12 years on the job, I looked in the mirror and said, "Okay, in your heart of hearts you know what you want to do. What are you waiting for?" That morning I went to my supervisor and asked for a leave of absence. A few days later I resigned.

Word got out in the music community that I was no longer working for the state, and a few days after I resigned I bumped into [songwriter and producer] Terry Lewis. I'll never forget it. He said, "Hey, Doc, I heard that you're out here now. I'll call you next week." He did, and the next thing I knew, I was on the staff of Flyte Tyme Productions as a producer with Jimmy Jam and Terry Lewis. That was the beginning.

For me, that decision was about putting faith into action.

It's still not easy. When you work for yourself, there are no sick days, vacation days, or benefits. It's frequently a struggle financially. But I keep on pushing.

Is it worth it? Of course. Certainly, the Grammys we've won are awards we treasure. But away from the glare of the lights, at an airport or in a restaurant, when someone comes up to us to say that our music helped to change their life or save their life? Nothing beats that.

I road tripped with a new friend.

Peter Burkill '04 is a doctor at the University of Maryland Medical Center.

In 2009 I was doing a short externship at Planned Parenthood in Minneapolis after finishing up my first year of medical school at the University of North Carolina. One day, I went to a coffee shop, saw a cute girl, and we started talking. We must've talked for an hour or two, and I asked her out on a date. I was leaving the city soon, and she was leaving sooner, but we decided to go out anyway.

Our schedules were wildly different—Katie, a classical singer and artist, got off work at 10 p.m., I had to start work at 6 a.m., but over the next few days we went on four-hour dates daily. The stakes seemed low, so we were honest with each other. There was a freedom to our conversations. Just before she left, we tentatively agreed to take a road trip together when I returned to Minneapolis in a few weeks.

I have been called impulsive before, but I had never done anything like that. We could both see that the other was ready for an adventure.

When I got back into town to pick her up, neither of us really even remembered what the other person looked like, but we had agreed to take a five-week, 10,000-mile road trip around the United States together. It seemed exciting. It seemed like it would make a good story.

There was a point, maybe on day three, when we were driving through the plains, just nothingness. I thought to myself, "Oh my God, what are we doing?" But then I also thought "Well, this is actually great."

We knew before the end of the road trip that it was serious, and we moved in together not long after we got back. We married in 2011.

Yes, it was probably one of the biggest risks either of us had ever taken, but we both totally committed to a larger dream.

I left a dream job for a new field.

Daniel Gumnit, who attended Macalester from 1978 through 1981, is CEO of People Serving People in Minneapolis.

In 2011, I had what seemed like a dream job, developing national prime time programming for PBS. I was working with smart, creative people whom I really enjoyed. Millions of people saw the television shows I developed.

And that was when I got a call from a recruiter who wanted me to consider taking a position as CEO for People Serving People, a Minneapolis homeless shelter for children and families. At first I thought he was crazy. Why would he call a television guy?

Eventually I realized what they were looking for was not somebody to run the shelter from an operational perspective, but someone to reshape the conversation about childhood homelessness in our community.

So I started doing some research. I went to the organization's fundraising events to see what it was like. I began to understand

what the opportunities really were from a change-the-conversation perspective.

And I realized then what a rare opportunity this was. How often are you given the chance to make a profound difference in the lives of our most vulnerable children on a daily basis?

I took the job, and it has been five years now. I'm grateful that people saw something in me that I couldn't have possibly imagined.

I chose Macalester.

Arlin Buyert '64, a poet and former corporate executive, lives in Leawood, Kansas.

I grew up on a farm near Sioux Center in northwestern Iowa. It might seem hard for many students today to imagine, but when I was 17, I had never been outside of Iowa. I'd been to Des Moines once and Iowa City once. I was so busy with chores—taking care of the chickens and the hogs, milking the cows.

One day, my optometrist offered to drive me up to Macalester when he took his brother there for a campus visit. I had never been to St. Paul, which was 200 miles away.

I fell in love with the college, and when I got home I told my mom and dad that I wanted to go there. I remember my dad telling me I could attend a nearby two-year college instead. He said then I could still help with the crops and the chores, and I could live at home. But my mother said, "He's going to Macalester."

And I did.

I remember being very lonely at the beginning. It was so different. And I knew, of course, that I had disappointed my dad, in a way. There were so many international students. My roommate was gay. My professors exposed me to so many different perspectives. And it changed my whole outlook.

Even my time on the basketball team was an education. We flew to Atlanta over winter break, the first time I'd ever been on an airplane. One year, we took a train Seattle—I had never before seen mountains or the ocean.

For me, going to Macalester was as life changing as you can imagine. I'm so grateful for it.

I uprooted my life to move to Bali.

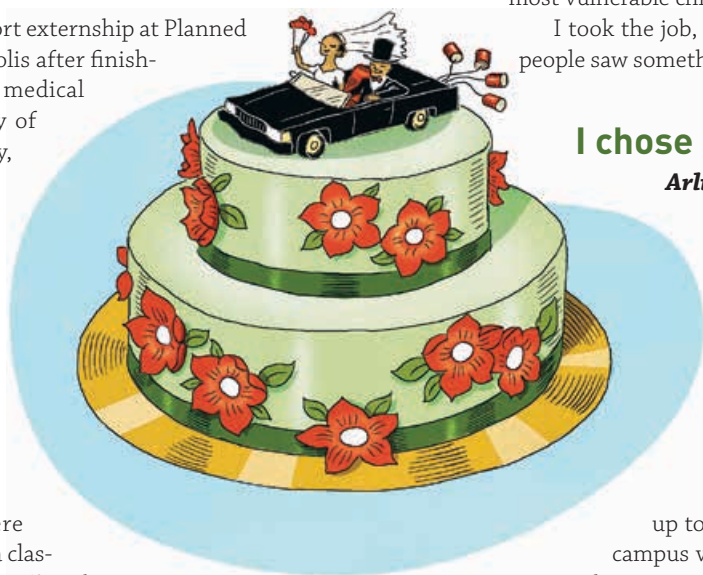
Anne Harold '12 lives in New York City. She is currently a freelance writer and website designer.

After I graduated from Macalester, I moved to Portland, Maine, where I got a job at a green architecture and engineering firm. I was in a relationship. At that time, my life felt very domestic.

As my contract position came to a close, I heard about a woman who wanted to start a foundation in Indonesia called Sawah Bali, which would help farmers transition from mono-crop agriculture to diversified, high-value permaculture.

I could continue to build a career in the United States or I could go to a new place, a truly different culture. The opportunity seemed like destiny.

Making that decision was thrilling. I had to let go of what I thought I was going to do and give this a try. I was there for a three-month position, and then I returned to the United States for two months. But I missed Bali so much that I went back and stayed for another year and a half.



Working at a small nonprofit was magical. My ideas were valued and we listened to one another. I could make real contributions, even though I was only 23 years old. I learned how to see people on their own terms and understand how people in different cultures work.

But I also knew that I was heading down a different path from that of many of my peers. If I'd stayed in New York, maybe I would be working in a high-profile start-up. I might have benefits by now.

What I learned through the experience is that the world is full many amazing opportunities if you are open to them. When I graduated, I really wanted to know where I was going to live and what I was going to do. Now I've learned to let go a bit, and not plan so much.

I chose a bicoastal life.

Helga Ying '87 is vice president of external engagement and corporate responsibility for American Eagle Outfitters.

I spent 13 years heading up Levi Strauss & Co.'s worldwide government affairs and public policy department. As part of that role, I worked on public policy issues such as worker rights, environmental sustainability, and HIV/AIDS.

When the president of Levi's became the president and CEO of American Eagle Outfitters, he approached me about forming a whole new department in American Eagle that would address almost all of corporate affairs: corporate social responsibility, community affairs, a foundation, and human and worker rights.

There was just one catch: I lived with my family in San Francisco and my husband is a tenured professor at the University of California-Berkeley, but American Eagle Outfitters is headquartered in Pittsburgh with a design center in New York.

It was a huge decision: Do I take a job that would give me much greater responsibility and allow me to push a company to become more socially responsible? Or do I stay here with my family?

Luckily, I was able, in a way, to do both. I still live in San Francisco, but I travel frequently among the three cities. I'm home every weekend, and with technology, there are ways to be with my family and the company wherever I am. Of course there are sacrifices, and both my husband and I have made them.

But my work at the company is also making an impact. For example, Aerie, our women's lingerie brand, no longer Photoshops or airbrushes any of its models. And we recently partnered with an organization called the National Eating Disorder Association to help raise awareness for an illness that affects four million people, many in our company's demographic. I hope this work will help the entire industry move toward using more diverse body types in advertising.

I stopped taking sides.

Mel Duncan '72 is a cofounder of Nonviolent Peaceforce.

In 1997, as part of a Bush Fellowship, I found myself at the University of Creation Spirituality in Oakland, California. We'd just started studying [the Persian poet and Sufi mystic] Rumi, and at one point, the

teacher, looking directly at me, said, "Your job is to enter the heart of your enemy."

I wrote that down in my notebook with my own addition: "Enter the heart of my enemy. That's a good place to rip it out."

That idea had been part of my philosophy for a long time. For years, I had occasionally appeared on the Twin Cities public television show *Almanac*, on a panel that debated the week's political events. People recognized me at the grocery store, but my wife wasn't impressed. What was I modeling for our kids, she asked, by interrupting, not listening, making sure my points were being made, and trying to make others look bad?

Further down in my notebook, I wrote something else about that Rumi idea: "Don't go back to sleep. This could change your life."

It did. I was challenged to re-examine the dualistic way that I saw the world. Within months I was sitting in a room with spiritual leader Thich Nhat Hanh, who was explaining that we were no longer at a place where we could afford to take sides. The stakes were too high.

Not long after that, I came up with the idea of Nonviolent Peaceforce [a group that promotes dialogue among conflicting parties and provides a peaceful, protective presence for threatened civilians]. Today there are more than 200 people who are part of the organization, and we're active in the Philippines, Myanmar, Syria, and South Sudan.

I always encourage people to go in the direction of what they are meant to do. It's important to try to discern, in a deep way, what that is, and to take that risk, even if it means you fail.

I left Texas for good.

Marcos Ortega is an assistant professor of biology at Macalester.

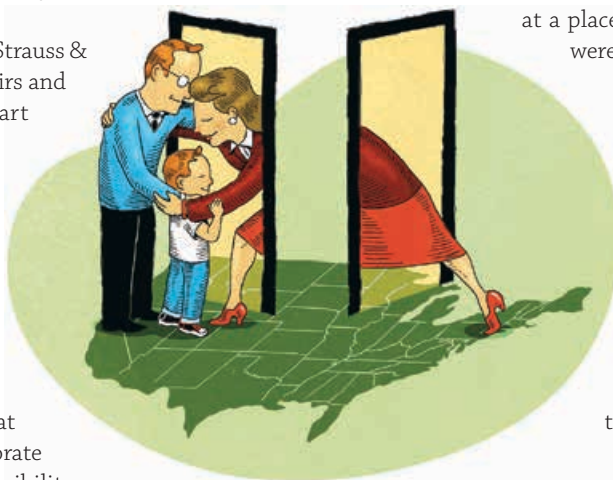
I'm from El Paso, and where I come from, most people do not get a college education. But my grades were good, I had good SATs, and I played football. Grinnell College, a small school in Iowa, reached out to me. I had no idea where Iowa was, but it seemed like an opportunity that could open doors, so I went.

I got there and wanted to leave almost immediately. The weather was hard, the classes were hard, understanding the culture was hard. I felt like an imposter, and I hated asking for help. I actually did leave after my second year, in part because of the challenge of classes such as organic chemistry. That class was easy for the top 10 percent of the class. The rest of us had to really work at it.

After a year at home, I went back to Grinnell. I thought life would be easier in El Paso, but I realized there was good and bad in both places. I also knew that if I went home for good, I might make the same mistakes my friends and family had made: teenage pregnancy, unsteady jobs, unsteady relationships. It's been years, and I still miss the closeness I had with my mother. We talk every day, but being away from her and my extended family is a sacrifice.

At Macalester, I work hard to connect with students. I try to have empathy for their struggles and anxieties because I struggled along the way, too. I try to spend time with students from underserved communities—minorities, first-generation students. I want them to understand that they can be who they are, and learn to navigate these waters in their own way. ■

ERIN PETERSON is a regular contributor to *Macalester Today*.



GET SET FOR GENERATION



As Millennials move on, Macalester gets ready to welcome the largest and most diverse cohort of students in its history.

BY LAURA BILLINGS COLEMAN



IF YOU'VE EVER WORRIED about how a Facebook post or re-tweet might reflect on your character, then just imagine the complicated communications strategy Elyan Paz, associate director of admissions, must consider with every poke, like, and fave on her department's social media platforms. Charged with directing the Admissions Department's electronic communications strategy, Paz must connect with the first generation of prospective students to have grown up entirely in the digital age.

"It's complicated, because you want to be in the spaces where they are, but you don't want to overwhelm them with news bits," says Paz. "At the same time, students are very media savvy, and they do respond to one-on-one communication. If a prospective student uses our #hey-mac hashtag, they probably want us to notice."

Using segmented mailing lists for each region of the country, Paz sends targeted emails, for example, to prospective English majors to highlight Marlon James's recent Booker Prize, to showcase current students from the Chicago area (one of Mac's biggest markets), and to reassure prospects from California that Minnesota winters aren't *that* miserable. Every post, click, and share can be analyzed from a comprehensive communications dashboard, but these measurements can't count the many "stealth applicants" quietly researching Macalester's new mobile-responsive website, ideal for viewing on smart phones and iPads.

Finding prospective college students where they live is a fast-moving media target—more than a quarter of 13- to 17-year-olds have al-

ready left Facebook in favor of rising platforms like Snapchat, Secret, and Whisper. That's why Paz is particularly proud of the traction the Admissions Department gained on Instagram, after she handed it over to a student photographer charged with taking candid shots of campus life. "We didn't want a professional look to the photos," says Paz. "We wanted it to be authentic."

If your first glimpse of Macalester College arrived in the form of a glossy printed brochure, then it's time to get acquainted with a generation looking at their college options in a whole new way: Generation Z.

Coming of age just as the Millennials move into adulthood, Generation Z is the largest age cohort in American history, making up 25 percent of the country's population. Digitally savvy, racially diverse, and raised in the wake of 9/11 and the Great Recession, they're poised to become the best educated population in history, with 50 percent planning to pursue higher education, compared to 33 percent of Millennials and 25 percent of Gen Xers.

"The demographics of college students have been changing for awhile, but the speed of that change has accelerated rapidly," says Carole Arwidson, VP/Director of Market Research at The Lawlor Group, Inc., a higher education consulting firm based in Eden Prairie, Minn. "It's becoming critical for everyone involved in strategic thinking in higher ed to take a close look at this new marketplace and understand how to target and reach this generation, because they're doing nearly everything different from the generations that came before."

Forecast for International Growth

Although demographers disagree about whether Generation Z began in the mid-'90s or the turn of the century, campus observers will likely look back on fall 2015 as the official beginning of the Generation Z era at Macalester. That's when the college enrolled 585 first-year students from 50 states and 93 countries, creating the largest freshman class in more than 40 years.

In fact, the "yield" of students who accepted Macalester's offer of admission in 2015 was nearly 10 percent higher than forecasted. "It's a good problem to have, because it means that students want to be at Mac," says Jeff Allen, director of admissions. But with enrollment capped at just over 2,000 students, the larger-than-average class strained student housing and other campus resources—notably the International Student Programs. Director Aaron Colhapp and his staff expected to welcome about 60 new international students to campus last fall. Instead, 103 degree-seeking students and 14 exchange students showed up for orientation.

"Trying to predict the behavior of 18-year-olds is always risky, but last year really did surprise us," says Steve Colee, director of international admissions. He's seeing several new trends at work in the college marketplace. Thirty years ago, he says, Macalester was a pioneer in recruiting international students, and one of the few colleges to provide them with financial aid. "Now nearly every college has made international recruiting a priority, so it's a very crowded field. If you go to a college fair in Hanoi, you'd be amazed," he says, at the many institutions competing for a share of the nearly one million international students now attending U.S. colleges, a population that jumped by 10 percent in 2014-15 alone.

Making the case for a liberal arts education, rather than the career-track orientation of many international university systems, is a challenge, says Colee, even when recruiting in China, India, and South Korea—the three biggest countries represented at Macalester. "It's a cultural barrier you have to overcome as you talk to students about the functional and real advantages of a liberal arts education in this country."

But as the economy becomes more globalized, and career paths less predictable, he says, "You can make the case that being trained in a narrow field may help a student get that first job, but will they have the critical thinking skills to adapt to what comes next?"

Macalester's long history of internationalism, extending back to the 1940s, also helps support its recruiting strategy in growing markets such as Vietnam, Pakistan, and Brazil. Says Colee, "We started doing this because it mattered to us very deeply as an institution, and as a result we are better situated than many other small colleges."

Focused on Finances

Coming of age in the worst global recession since World War II, today's high school students are understandably concerned about the rising cost of college and whether the investment will pay off. In fact, a recent study of Generation Z conducted for Northeastern University found that 81 percent of young people believe a college degree is critical to having a desirable career, but nearly two-thirds call affordability their top concern.

A surprising 25 percent say no amount of student loan debt is manageable. "Families used to be willing to make financial sacrifices so their son or daughter could attend the college of their choice," says the Lawlor Group's Arwidson, "but the recession forced a lot of families

to rethink those choices, and question whether going to college at any price is still worth the financial investment."

With Macalester's 2016-17 annual total cost now at nearly \$62,000, "sticker shock is an issue for everyone," says Philana Tenhoff, associate director of admissions. That's why, for students with lower household incomes, admissions staffers emphasize that Mac is one of just 70 U.S. colleges that meets the full demonstrated financial need of degree-seeking undergraduates—a commitment to access and affordability that fewer than five percent of the country's colleges can make.

For upper-income students, says Tenhoff, "nearly every college is competing for them, so merit scholarships are becoming a growing strategy." Last year, in fact, more than 40 percent of first-year U.S. students received merit-based scholarships from Macalester, ranging from \$8,000 to \$72,000 over four years—awards that admissions officers say can often make the difference when it comes to choosing between a large public university and a small private college.

As for the question of value, admissions experts encourage families to check out the recently launched Department of Education College Scorecard website, which reports on average earnings and student debt rates at colleges across the country. Macalester's score card shows that 49 percent of its students take out federal loans to finance college, graduating with a typical debt load of \$23,502, and monthly payments of around \$260 a month (to be paid over 10 years at a 6 percent interest rate).

The scorecard also shows that recent graduates seem to be earning a good return on their investment, with graduation rates and average salaries far exceeding the national average, and with 96 percent of students able to make their monthly payments—compared to the national average of 66 percent.

"Sometimes we're asked bluntly if it's worth spending more," says admissions director Allen. "It's a personal decision and at some point families have to make it on their own. But we believe in the value of a Macalester education, and we think our graduates prove it."

Entrepreneurial and Old School

Today's rising college students are digital natives already accustomed to online education through sites like Khan Academy and do-it-yourself hacks from YouTube. Early forecasts fretted that Gen Z would "disrupt" the traditional college experience with demands for more online learning and other high-tech offerings, but in fact, the next wave of college students are turning out to be a little bit old school. Fewer Gen Zers are in favor of online classes (57 percent) than is the general public (72 percent), according to the Northeastern University study. Reassuringly (and surprisingly), 85 percent of them even prefer to interact with friends face to face, rather than on their phones.

What is markedly different about the Gen Z approach to college, says the Lawlor Group's Arwidson, is that they want a more clearly defined path between coursework and careers, as well as some help "articulating and translating how what they've gained in college has value to employers." For instance, nearly 8 in 10 Gen Z students surveyed by Northeastern are in favor of integrating their academic programs with internships, a movement already established at Macalester, where 72 percent of students intern.

Gen Z is also notable for its entrepreneurial spirit—a trend Macalester's strategic plan has deemed a new growth opportunity, pointing to the success of its Summer Startup and Macathon programs, among other initiatives, as proof that "entrepreneurship is energizing our students.... and this is only the beginning."

With 42 percent of Gen Zers expecting to run their own businesses someday, many colleges are embracing curricula and programs that encourage students to design their own majors, connect with the community, and develop creative problem-solving skills, says Arwidson. “They want to chart their own course, and those are great qualities to see in any set of students.”

Beyond Backyard Recruiting

Students from Minnesota have been the backbone of Macalester for decades, and the state still sends Mac the most students, accounting for about 15 percent of the student body. But since 2000, the number of high school graduates from the Midwest and Northeast has dropped by 18 and 23 percent, respectively—one reason that states like California and Texas are on the rise in the college’s student profile. With an estimated two-thirds of the nation’s high school graduates concentrated there, the West and South have become the new geographic center of Generation Z.

More shifts are in store when it comes to the cultural identity of tomorrow’s college students. According to *The Chronicle of Higher Education*, in the next decade, the number of college-age students who are Hispanic/Latino will rise by 14 percent, while students who are white, black and Asian will drop by 15 percent, 9 percent, and 5 percent respectively.

For private colleges in the Midwest and Northeast, reaching this new generation of students—many of them the first generation in their families to consider college—poses some challenges. “Most students choose a college within about 100 miles of home, but Hispanic students are willing to travel about half as far as white students,” says Arwidson. “As a group, they’re also less likely to attend a private college, more likely to work their way through college, and less likely to want to take on loans.”

When it comes to recruiting first-generation college students and students of color, Macalester starts with the same goals it has for every student, says Tenhoff. “Our strategy is to find the students who would be the best fit, who have the academic qualities and interests that will fit into the culture at Macalester,” she says. “That means we’re looking for students who are leaders, who are willing to ask tough questions, engage in dialogue about identity, and be involved in their community.”

But Macalester has also made some recent moves to lower the barriers Generation Z’s more diverse students may encounter on their way to college. Three years ago, for instance, Mac changed its policy regarding undocumented students, treating them as domestic rather than international students. That shift improves their odds of admissions, and also makes it possible for the college to meet a student’s full dem-

onstrated financial need—aid that’s not available to non-resident students. In 2014, the campus also adopted a strategic plan that commits to increasing the diversity of “our student body, faculty, and staff, with a particular emphasis on increasing the presence and retention within our community of traditionally underserved populations.”

In May, the college took another key step in that strategy, becoming the 38th college to partner with QuestBridge, a nonprofit that connects high-achieving, low-income students with top colleges. Starting this fall, students can apply to enter Macalester through QuestBridge’s National College Match admission program (see story below).

The QuestBridge partnership is one of many ways the college is working to help students from traditionally underserved communities feel welcome at Macalester—from the faculty groups that support first-generation students to the “Rites of Passage” ceremony that honors graduating seniors of color to the cultural group Adelante!, which serves as a resource for Latino students. “Macalester is a place where there is a lot of support for students of color,” says Karla Benson Rutten, Mac’s Title IX coordinator and director of equity.

Since Benson Rutten came to Macalester in 2002 to help launch the Department of Multicultural Life, the percentage of students of color at Mac has grown from 11 percent to the 30 percent of students admitted to the Class of 2020. “That’s an impressive change in 14 years,” she says. “I tell prospective students that if you’re looking for an HBCU (historically black colleges and universities), we’re not that. But if you want great opportunities in an urban setting, if you want to build relationships across the globe, this is a place to do that in a meaningful way. I also say, if you come here, you *will* graduate. The support you will get here is amazing.”

That support often starts during the admissions process in the form of the “sampler tours” that Mac provides to traditionally underserved students, providing them with free air travel and a chance to attend classes, as well as a full weekend in which to experience residential life. The spring sampler, which serves admitted students who haven’t previously visited campus, is particularly successful at encouraging prospective students to choose Macalester. Even more effective is the network of alumni who will speak candidly about what students of color can expect from four years at Mac.

“When you can make that match between a prospective student and a Mac grad, you know the student is getting the information they really need,” says Admissions’ Jeff Allen, who recently connected a nervous first-generation candidate with a recent alumnus in her region. “You need someone to say it’s doable. Scary, yes, unfamiliar, yes, but Macalester can be a great place for you.” That’s the message the college is working to get out now, to a whole new generation of students. ■

LAURA BILLINGS COLEMAN is a regular contributor to the magazine.

QUESTBRIDGE

Macalester College has joined QuestBridge, a national nonprofit that connects the nation’s most exceptional low-income youth with leading institutions of higher education.

QuestBridge partners with highly selective colleges and universities that

offer top-notch educational opportunities and financial resources to high-achieving, low-income students. All partners share a commitment to increasing the presence of these students on their campuses, and to making college affordable to all admitted students, regardless of their financial background.

Beginning this year, students will be able to apply through QuestBridge’s Na-

tional College Match admission program. The first admitted QuestBridge students will become part of Mac’s Class of 2021. Like all the partner colleges, Macalester will meet 100 percent of a student’s demonstrated financial need.

Macalester will be one of 39 partner colleges, a group that includes such top schools as Amherst, Brown, and Princeton.

MARKET-SAVVY FOREIGN AID

Mihir Desai '90 leads a thriving international development consultancy.

BY JAN SHAW-FLAMM '76 → PHOTO COURTESY OF MIHIR DESAI

At the height of the Iraq war, **Mihir Desai '90** was there. He was part of a small contingent of advisors working in Iraq with date farmers and agricultural enterprises, helping them improve their growing and handling of dates for the world market.

"I'll never forget it," says Desai. "Iraq is very agriculturally rich; about a third of it is like California. We were successfully helping marginalized date farmers improve their post-harvest handling—but then we couldn't get the product out of the country." There were days when coalition bombs destroyed date palms that farmers had been carefully cultivating for 15 years.

"Sometimes," Desai notes wryly, "the development and the defense goals of the United States are competing ideologies."

It was while he was completing an MBA at George Washington University that Desai took on his first research assignment in international development. The goal: reducing red tape for farmers seeking access to global markets. From that point on, Desai quit looking for a corporate job and became instead an international development analyst and manager.

A native of India, Desai had come to the United States for college and a better life. "I had seen firsthand how bribes and red tape in India killed hope. But as the son of a woman entrepreneur, I had also seen how a viable business could help people meet basic needs; providing dignity and a future. I recall how one seamstress kicked out her abusive husband because the steady job at my mother's workshop gave her the financial independence she needed to do so."

After building experience with employers like the World Bank, Desai in 2001 founded Dexis Consulting Group, which counsels on development projects around the world—80 countries in the past five years. With Desai as its president and CEO, Dexis provides management and technical services to support effective global development for clients such as USAID, the U.S. Department of State, and the World Bank.

Given that it has offices on Pennsylvania Avenue (just blocks from the White House) and nearby, Dexis is right in the thick of things in the capital. The company, which grew 700 percent in five years, now has 200 employees in 10 locations around the world, roughly half of whom are in D.C.

Dexis is at the forefront of a big transformation in foreign aid, evaluating and monitoring programs for USAID and other clients in what Desai refers to as "the golden age of accountability." Although less than one percent of the federal budget actually goes toward foreign aid (Americans consistently overestimate that percentage), Desai feels an

acute responsibility to see that taxpayer money is spent effectively.

"Unabashedly market-oriented" is how the group describes itself at dexisonline.com. "This is the new face of development," says Desai. "It is not taboo to make money. Charity is not sustainable. Reciprocity is."

Reciprocity sounds good, but how does the U.S. benefit from giving foreign aid? Desai explains, "Goodwill comes to mind, and certainly it's easier to make common cause with a country that we have partnered with in attaining their development goals. A second benefit is the growth of markets for U.S. goods, which is good for job creation here in the states. Other benefits depend on the specific situation."

For example, Dexis has a five-year contract to monitor and evaluate all aid going toward social programs in Honduras. That country, and its eight million people, became highly relevant to the U.S. government when large numbers of unaccompanied minors began pouring into the U.S. in recent years. Improving conditions at home not only helps Honduran children, it also reduces the number of unaccompanied minors arriving in the U.S.

Desai is very intentional about training the next generation of development workers. Each summer he brings two Macalester students to Dexis, where they gain invaluable experience; some even join the group after graduation. There are currently three other Mac alumni on the Dexis staff.

Former intern **Leia Cozier '15**, who works in project/contract management, has learned a great deal, she says, including how important the operations side of development is. "To have people out in the field doing the technical work, there needs to be a support team behind them so they can focus on their work and make a difference."

Javier Donoso '14, too, interned at Dexis before joining the firm. Now he works primarily in monitoring/evaluation and finance. "Mihir is great to work with," Donoso says. "He is very passionate about what he's doing, and always trying to push for more innovative ways to solve problems."

Still more Mac students got a chance to learn from Desai last spring, when a career exploration group visited Washington, D.C., and was invited to the Dexis offices. Asked for what advice he'd give Macalester students interested in development, Desai said, "Be sure to consider jobs and programs that focus on reciprocity and not charity. Eventually charity runs out and what is left is cynicism."

Desai himself is anything but cynical. He is proud that the company he founded contributes to successful international development that represents "the greatest heart of the American people." ■

JAN SHAW-FLAMM '76 is a staff writer for the magazine.

“Charity is not sustainable.
Reciprocity is.”



In Memoriam

1937

Mortimer A. Dittenhofer, 102, died March 4, 2016, in Silver Spring, Md. As a second lieutenant in the Army during World War II, Mr. Dittenhofer helped develop a system to account for Nazi and German government property. He worked as an auditor for the Atomic Energy Commission, NASA, and the Department of Health, Education, and Welfare. After retiring as an assistant director of the Government Accounting Office, he taught accounting and auditing at Georgetown University and Florida International University, attaining tenure at 78. Mr. Dittenhofer is survived by two children and numerous grandchildren and great-grandchildren.

1938

Margaret McDonald Dustrud, 99, of Moorhead, Minn., died March 20, 2016. She was a high school English, Latin, and music teacher; a civilian instructor with the Army Air Force; and a member of the Navy WAVES during World

War II. After she was honorably discharged, Mrs. Dustrud worked for 21 years as a bookkeeper, teller, and customer service representative for First National Bank, retiring in 1978. Mrs. Dustrud is survived by a son and a sister.

1940

Harold W. Larson, 99, of Scottsdale, Ariz., died March 25, 2016. He served with the Army Air Corps as a B-25 navigator on 54 missions over North Africa and Italy during World War II. Mr. Larson and his brother opened Harold Chevrolet Dealership in Bloomington, Minn., in 1969. Mr. Larson is survived by daughter **Susan Larson Buckley '78**, a son, five grandchildren, and 12 great-grandchildren.

1941

Mildred Elizabeth "Betty" Dunkelburger Mason, 96, of Wayzata, Minn., died June 15, 2016. Mrs. Mason was an active member of the Minnesota Music Teachers Association and ran a

thriving piano studio. She also worked at the *Monticello Times*, which she and her late husband, **Monte A. Mason '40**, owned and operated for several years. Mrs. Mason is survived by two sons, including Michael Mason and **Monte M. Mason '71**, and a daughter, Merry Mason Whipple, and four grandchildren.

Thomas R. Trutna, 95, of Hastings, Minn., died Nov. 20, 2015. He served in the Korean War and practiced dentistry in Hastings for 55 years. Mr. Trutna is survived by a daughter, son **Thomas Trutna '68**, seven children, and 10 great-grandchildren.

1942

Harriet Brown Davis, 96, of Kennewick, Wash., died Feb. 25, 2016. She worked as a medical and x-ray technician in Washington and Berkeley, Calif., an adoption counselor for Catholic Family and Child Service, a social worker, and an outpatient counselor at Kennewick General Hospital, retiring in the early 2000s. Mrs.

Davis is survived by a daughter, a son, two grandchildren, and five great-grandchildren.

Barbara Dailey Ruud, 94, of Austin, Texas, died April 7, 2016. After earning a law degree from the University of Minnesota in 1943, Mrs. Ruud was the first woman to work for State Farm Insurance as a claims adjuster. She was active in the effort to abolish the poll tax in Texas, served on the Texas Bar Association's administrative law committee, and was named president of the Austin League of Women Voters. She also served as legal counsel to Texas Governors Preston Smith and Dolph Briscoe and U.S. Representative J.J. Pickle, and was an assistant attorney under two Texas attorneys general. Mrs. Ruud is survived by three sons, three grandchildren, and two great-grandchildren.

1943

Russell E. Sargent, 96, of Cairo, N.Y., died April 25, 2016. He did missionary work for the Methodist Church in Latin America and worked

EXPLORE

COSTA RICA and Panama



Join Macalester alumni for an unforgettable 8-day adventure by small ship through Costa Rica and Panama. Explore national parks, conservation areas, and shorelines on foot and by skiff, kayak, or paddle board outings.

March 25 - April 1, 2017

Pricing begins at \$3,995, plus airfare.

For more information and to sign up:
www.macalester.orbridge.com

In Memoriam

with the Heifer International Project in Mexico. A youth camp in Costa Rica is named after Rev. Sargent, in recognition of his work. He served numerous United Methodist congregations throughout New York, most recently as associate pastor at Catskill United Methodist Church. Rev. Sargent is survived by a daughter, four sons, 11 grandchildren, and three great-grandchildren.

1944

Ethel Peterson Carlson, 93, of Willmar, Minn., died April 19, 2015.

George W. Lund, 93, of Edina, Minn., died April 24, 2016. He served as a physician in the U.S. Army and cofounded St. Louis Park Medical Center in 1951. One of the first board-certified pediatric cardiologists in Minnesota, Dr. Lund practiced at Minneapolis Children's Hospital during its early years and served as president of the Hennepin County Medical Society, Methodist Hospital in St. Louis Park, and Minnesota's Foundation for Health Care. He retired in 1984. Dr. Lund is survived by two sons and two grandchildren.

Betty Topel Yaeger, 92, died Sept. 12, 2014. After a brief career in medical technology, she became a homemaker. Mrs. Yaeger is survived by 3 daughters, 2 sons, 16 grandchildren, and 6 great-grandchildren.

1945

Jean Wenzel Fuller of St. Paul died April 14, 2016. She worked in the library at Highland Park Junior High School. Mrs. Fuller is survived by a daughter, two sons (including **Michael Fuller '68**), seven grandchildren, 12 great-grandchildren, and brother **James Wenzel '49**. She was preceded in death by her husband, **Dr. D. Forest Fuller '45**, her sister, **Elaine Wenzel Gladitsch '48**, her father, **Charles Mitchell Wenzel '19**, and several other Mac alum family members.

Georgia Pohl Maurine, 93, of Shakopee, Minn., died May 2, 2016. She taught in Atwater, Minn., and retired as an elementary school teacher in 1988. Mrs. Maurine is survived by two daughters, two sons, two

grandchildren, and two great-grandchildren.

1946

Robert F. Chadwick, 91, of Edina, Minn., died Feb. 20, 2016. He served in the U.S. Navy. Mr. Chadwick is survived by two daughters, a son, three grandchildren, and two great-grandchildren.

1947

Roberta Campbell Perkins, 89, died Nov. 11, 2014. She is survived by five daughters, a son, 16 grandchildren, 20 great-grandchildren, and a sister.

1948

Ardyce Johnson Davies, 89, died Feb. 25, 2016, in North Oaks, Minn. She taught in Hutchinson, Minn., was active with the League of Women Voters, and served as a delegate for presidential candidate Eugene McCarthy in 1968. Mrs. Davies was married to William Davies and had two daughters, two sons, and four grandchildren.

1949

Dorothy Abplanalp Bennett, 86, of Chagrin Falls, Ohio, died Feb. 26, 2014. She is survived by two daughters, two sons, 12 grandchildren, and two great-grandchildren.

Harry A. Kirkham, 88, of Duluth, Minn., died Nov. 16, 2014. He was a World War II veteran, a master plumber, an Episcopal priest, and an alcoholism counselor. Mr. Kirkham is survived by his wife, Alice, a daughter, two sons (including **James Kirkham '74**), six grandchildren, and two great-grandchildren.

1950

Robert O. Hegge, 85, of Redding, Calif., died April 19, 2013. He did social work and started a telephone reconditioning business in 1973. Mr. Hegge is survived by his wife, Connie, a daughter, two granddaughters, and a brother.

Janice Pickle Skold, 87, died April 21, 2016. She is survived by her husband, Ken, four sons, nine grandchildren, and six great-grandchildren.

1951

John L. Crawford, 91, died April 16, 2016, in Luverne, Minn. He was a pharmacist who owned and operated drugstores in Pipestone, Minn., Jasper, Minn., and Brandon, S.D., and opened the Thoughtfulness Gift Shop in Pipestone. He also farmed throughout his life. Mr. Crawford is survived by a daughter, two sons, nine grandchildren, four great-grandchildren, and brother **Fran Crawford '51**.

Jo Ann Erickson Dowling, 86, died April 12, 2016, in Lake City, Iowa. She taught high school English in Glencoe, Minn., for two years and in Lake City for 20 years. Mrs. Dowling is survived by her husband, Jack, a daughter, a son, and two brothers.

Richard E. Gregory, 89, of St. Paul died April 21, 2016. He served as an American Baptist missionary in Thailand for 36 years. Mr. Gregory is survived by a daughter, two sons (including **Charles Gregory '80**), seven grandchildren, and three great-grandchildren.

1952

Betty Middlemas Barnes, 87, of Appleton, Wis., died April 20, 2016. She was a schoolteacher and taught computer skills to adults. Mrs. Barnes is survived by a daughter, two sons, and six grandchildren.

Joseph Capetz, 86, died Oct. 14, 2015. He was a veteran, educator, author, and jazz musician. Mr. Capetz is survived by five children and eight grandchildren.

Nancy Shern Lohmann, 85, of New Hope, Minn., died March 31, 2016. She is survived by two daughters, a son, four grandchildren, and five great-grandchildren.

Marilyn Roberts Rogers, 85, of Marshall, Minn., died March 27, 2016. She taught medical technology, worked as an administrator with the Medical Institute of Minnesota, and was a compliance officer with a local bank. Mrs. Rogers is survived by three daughters, seven grandchildren, and a great-granddaughter.

1954

Richard J. Kildegaard, 88, of Minneapolis died Dec. 8, 2015. He

is survived by his wife, Leslie, three daughters, a son, 13 grandchildren, and two great-grandsons.

Danolda Dokken Marcos, 83, of Minneapolis died Feb. 16, 2016. She worked as a systems engineering manager at IBM for 12 years. She later brought computers into the Minneapolis public school system and was finance director for a market research firm. With her husband, Mrs. Marcos organized the largest neighborhood-led effort in the United States to combat Dutch elm disease. She is survived by a daughter, a son, three grandchildren, and a sister.

Inez Shelby Nelson, 83, died March 5, 2016, in State College, Pa. She was a stay-at-home mother, an elementary school teacher, and a saleswoman and buyer for several fashion stores. Mrs. Nelson is survived by her husband, Richard, a daughter, two sons, five grandchildren, three great-grandchildren, and two sisters.

1955

M. Clint Bristol, 85, of Richfield and Prior Lake, Minn., died Nov. 28, 2015. He was a veteran of the Korean War and worked as a credit manager. Mr. Bristol is survived by three daughters and three grandchildren.

Daniel C. Neale, 85, of Tucson, Ariz., died March 15, 2016. After teaching educational psychology at the University of Minnesota, Mr. Neale spent 25 years at the University of Delaware, where he was a professor and dean in the College of Education. He wrote numerous papers and co-wrote the book *Strategies for School Improvement*. Mr. Neale is survived by his wife, Alice, three children, and five grandchildren.

Gordon E. Panushka, 83, died Feb. 5, 2016, in Wheat Ridge, Colo. He served as an officer in the U.S. Navy, managed an insurance claims office, financed large construction equipment, and worked as a claims adjuster. Mr. Panushka was also a ski patrol volunteer who continued skiing until age 80. He is survived by his wife, Connie, a daughter, six grandchildren, and two brothers.

1956

Warde L. Brown, 84, of River Falls, Wis., died May 17, 2016. He

served in the U.S. Navy, worked for Burroughs Corporation, and retired from Swenson Anderson Associates after a 20-year career as a financial advisor. Mr. Brown is survived by his wife, **Renee Park Brown '57**, two sons, five grandchildren, and two great-grandchildren.

John E. Raymond, 86, of Minnetonka, Minn., died recently. He served in the U.S. Navy during the Korean War. During a 50-year career in banking and finance, Mr. Raymond was president of First Bank Hopkins and retired from Miller & Schroeder. He is survived by his wife, Betsy, three daughters, a son, nine grandchildren, three great-grandchildren, and sister **Virginia Raymond Sall '62**.

1958

Howard M. Stien, 89, of Spokane, Wash., died Feb. 22, 2016. He served as a tail gunner with the U.S. Army Air Corps in Italy. He worked in biological science at Pepperdine University, the University of Wyoming, Northwestern College, Eastern Washington University, and Whitworth University. Mr. Stien is survived by his wife, Pat, two daughters, seven grandchildren, and six great-grandchildren.

Fred P. Themmes, 84, of Oakdale, Minn., died Feb. 28, 2016. He is survived by two daughters, a son, four grandchildren, a sister, and two brothers.

1960

Lester J. Beernink, 77, of Naples, Fla., died Feb. 19, 2016. He worked as a financial advisor for 30 years. Mr. Beernink is survived by his wife, Kay, two daughters (including **Jill Beernink Schwartz '87**), a son, two grandchildren, and a sister, **Donna Beernink Gunderson-Rogers '56**.

Sharon Siegel Sechrist, 77, of Shoreview, Minn., died April 2, 2016. She taught chemistry at Minneapolis Community and Technical College. Mrs. Sechrist is survived by a daughter, a son, two grandchildren, and three sisters.

1961

Carl D. Wingren died recently. He served in the U.S. Army and was a vice president with National Car

Rental. Mr. Wingren is survived by his wife, Janice, a daughter, a son, a granddaughter, and two sisters.

1962

Richard B. Hume, 75, of Plymouth, Minn., died April 3, 2016. He worked in the investment business for more than 40 years. Mr. Hume is survived by his wife, Sandy, two daughters, three sons, nine grandchildren, two great-grandchildren, and two brothers.

1963

John M. Butler, 74, died Oct. 7, 2015, in Minneapolis.

1965

Carl J. Hoffstedt, 72, of Golden Valley, Minn., died March 11, 2016. He retired in 2000 after 34 years as a civil engineer with the Minnesota Department of Transportation. Mr. Hoffstedt is survived by his wife, Diane, a daughter, a son, and three granddaughters.

1966

Harry K. Cummings, 74, died Aug. 1, 2015. He worked in sales and marketing for K2 and JanSport and was a real estate broker for more than 20 years. Mr. Cummings is survived by his wife, Beth, two daughters, three sons, 10 grandchildren, and a brother.

1967

James R. Carlson, 71, of Hibbing, Minn., died Feb. 27, 2016. He worked in construction as a union carpenter. Mr. Carlson is survived by his wife, Jane Ahlf, two daughters, a granddaughter, and a brother.

Ilona Rozsa Larson, 70, of Rochester, Minn., died Feb. 9, 2016. She taught for 34 years in the Rochester school system, retiring in 2001. Later in life, she learned the art of hand-beading dried gourds, and her work was featured in a bead supplier's magazine ad. Mrs. Larson is survived by her husband, Wayne, a daughter, two sons, and five grandchildren.

1970

John P. Katsontonis, 67, died March 15, 2016, in Barrington, Ill.

He was a musician who, according to classmate **Peter Fenn '70**, "gave his all, whether playing in his bands or advising his clients on how best to communicate their passions." Mr. Katsontonis is survived by his wife, **Tracy Dalton '71**.

Eugene E. Kranz, 67, of Edina, Minn., died March 19, 2016. He retired in 2004 after 34 years with NSP/Xcel Energy's test laboratory. Mr. Kranz is survived by his wife, Penny, a daughter, and his mother.

1971

John W. Berquist, 69, of Fayal Township, Minn., died May 12, 2016. A fixture on the Minneapolis West Bank folk music scene during the '60s and '70s, Mr. Berquist toured Europe and founded the Moose Wallow Ramblers, whose song "I Like It In Duluth" was a local hit. He was also a folk-life specialist with an interest in the cultural heritage of the Iron Range, particularly the oral history and music of the region's early 20th century immigrants. Mr. Berquist's live radio program, *Jackpine Jamboree*, was nominated for an award by the Corporation for Public Broadcasting. He is survived by his wife, Carol Hepokoski, two sons, and a brother.

Barry B. Jefferson, 65, of Woodland Park, Colo., died Nov. 3, 2014. He taught in Colorado and worked for Marsh and McLennan in Minneapolis and New York City until his retirement. Mr. Jefferson is survived by his wife, **Nancy Dalldorf Jefferson '71**, a daughter, a son, and a grandson.

Tyler G. Neptune, 67, of Batavia, Ill., died March 18, 2016. He served in the U.S. Army and earned a law degree from John Marshall Law School. Mr. Neptune is survived by a son, two grandchildren, and two brothers.

1974

Timothy J. Moore, 63, of Lackawanna, N.Y., died April 10, 2016. He is survived by two daughters, two sons, four grandchildren, three sisters, and five brothers.

1984

Clayton J. Nimtz, 53, died April 13, 2016. He was a supervisor at Great

Lakes Educational Loan Services for more than 19 years. Mr. Nimtz is survived by a sister.

2018

Macalester sophomore **Jess P. Mendes**, 19, died March 22, 2016, in St. Paul. He enjoyed reading and writing poetry and playing soccer and Ultimate Frisbee. Mr. Mendes is survived by his parents, a grandmother, and a brother.

Other Losses



Gary Erickson, longtime visiting assistant professor of art and art history at Macalester, died May 18, 2016, at 60. He was a ceramics artist who worked extensively in Jingdezhen, China, and whose abstract sculptures were exhibited nationally and internationally and held in numerous collections, including the Smithsonian Institution's Renwick Gallery and the Cuban Institute of Friendship with the People. Mr. Erickson, who joined the faculty in 1995, also taught salsa dancing at the college. He is survived by his mother, a sister, and a brother.

Peter A. Howell, who taught chemistry at Macalester from 1969 to 1970 and again in the mid-'90s, died Aug. 19, 2015, in Oak Park Heights, Minn., at 86. He was a senior research specialist at 3M and an editor for the *Minnesota Chemist* newsletter. He also was an inventor on five patents, including one for a glass bubble that allows submarines to dive to greater depths. Mr. Howell is survived by his wife, Gladys, two daughters, a son, four grandchildren, and a great-granddaughter.

From Student to Teacher

BY HOWARD SINKER '78

DO YOU KNOW HOW INTIMIDATING it is to teach your favorite college class? I've been teaching a news reporting course at Macalester for more than 20 years now, and I can assure you I'm not as completely awestruck as I was when I started.

Just 98 percent.

Each Monday night I set up in Neill Hall (the Humanities Building to most of you) and behave as professorially as my nature allows. I encourage my students to be on a first-name basis, lest I look over my shoulder for "Professor" or "Mister" Sinker. I'm teaching a class that's entirely different from the one that I took from George Moses in the 1970s—or even from the one I taught at Mac in the early 2000s. So many things affecting journalism weren't out there even a few years ago.

Students don't need to be taught about social media. They bring that knowledge with them. But when it comes to harnessing those tools and using them in the pursuit of news—that's where I can take them places they haven't even thought about.

I also tell my students that I'm setting a much higher standard for their work than so much of what passes for journalism today. In other words, "Do as I say, not as you too often see done in the media."

Here are a few other things I ask of them:

- Spare me the word *seems*. If something only *seems* to be the case, you have more reporting to do.
- Spare me your personal point of view. If you have biases and preferences, check them at the door.
- Spare me your need for perfection. If your goal is to do great work from Day 1, you're in the wrong class. This is a new form of writing and researching for most students, and it isn't mastered in a few weeks.
- Spare me your hope that this will be your throwaway course. News reporting isn't a class for students planning to spend most of their energy elsewhere.

Teaching reporting at Macalester is different from teaching it at many other schools. For one thing, few of my students will go on to become media professionals. However, many will be involved with the media in some fashion during their careers, and thus I contend that learning about journalism is important. No person of influence today can afford to be naïve about the media, which is why our classroom discussions frequently range far beyond the nuts and bolts of reporting.

I try to run a happy classroom. I bring in cookies nearly every week and popcorn on movie nights. I am regularly available to my students



via Facebook, text, and email. On a good night, they'll talk more than I do. Toward the end of the semester, when workloads collide, I cut back on class time in return for great work on their final assignments. I hope they describe me as demanding and compassionate—and fun.

When students work hard on an assignment—only to find it fails to resemble a news story—I tell them to forget about redoing it. Instead, I ask them to show me on their future assignments that they understand what they did wrong on this one. Those students are frequently completing A-level work by the semester's end. I'm happy to see their progress, but not surprised.

Recently getting my own three children through college has also improved my teaching. My oldest child firmed my resolve to ban open laptops in class when he admitted that he was usually watching baseball or videos on his. All my kids have indulged my questions about what makes for a good classroom experience—and what doesn't.

I love that much of what I'm teaching in 2015 wouldn't even have been discussed in 1975, but that the standards for good writing and reporting are eternal. I love the opportunities that come from teaching. I get invited to college events and feel as comfortable in the Campus Center and the Leonard Center as I do in my classroom.

My full-time job at the [Minneapolis] *Star Tribune*, and the many roles I've held there over the years, give me the credibility to teach at Macalester. In turn, teaching has sparked my desire to be a journalist who looks toward the future while embracing the present and valuing the past. And that feels very Macalester. ■

HOWARD SINKER '78 is the digital sports editor for startribune.com.



THANK YOU
for supporting
Macalester
this year!

Members of the Macalester community support
the college's commitment to creating an
accessible, transformative educational
experience for all students.

With your help, the Annual Fund was able
to raise over **\$4.3 million** from
June 1, 2015–May 31, 2016.

You make Mac possible.



MACALESTER COLLEGE



1600 Grand Avenue
Saint Paul, MN 55105-1899

CHANGE SERVICE REQUESTED

Non-Profit
Organization
U.S. Postage
PAID
Permit No. 921
Twin Cities, MN



PHOTOS: DAVID J. TURNER